



FORRESTER PARK

BECKINGHAM ROAD, GREAT TOTHAM, NR MALDON, ESSEX CM9 8EA
01621 891406 ~ info@forrester-park.co.uk ~ www.forrester-park.co.uk

LETTER FROM TIM TO THE CAPTAINS AND COMMITTEES

1st May 2021

Firstly, I would like to welcome all golf members back, we have missed your company, conversation and banter. We also would like to extend our sympathy to those who have suffered and lost loved ones during the last year. Without the support of Forrester Park's members, the world is a poorer place.

As we all know, this strange year has made keeping in touch quite a challenge, and now that we are slowly returning to 'normal' I wanted to give you feedback on some issues which have been raised, and to share with you some of our plans for the future.

I realise that, although our team has worked hard throughout the pandemic trying to keep everything as you would wish to find it, we have not had our usual face-to-face exchanges of views and have not sufficiently communicated what we are up to. We will therefore try to do better from now on, and make sure that there are plenty of forums for discussion and feedback.

So, to start with, here are some answers to questions and concerns which have been passed on to me by the club captains.

COURSE

Dry greens [Committee]

Over the last six weeks we have, incredibly, had only 3mm of rain. However, because of the continual frosts we had avoided watering due to the risk of icy greens and of the pop-up valves freezing and breaking. With the end of the frosts earlier this week we are now watering and the greens are improving.

Condition of tee boxes [PY and SB]

We are aware that the tee boxes need levelling, and we are considering a four-year scheme that would involve levelling four tees per winter and installing a pop-up sprinkler system.

Willows by the 2nd/18th tees [SB]

It has been requested that these are cut back. We will look into carrying this out.

Rabbit holes on tees [Committee]

During Covid restrictions we have been unable to deal with the rabbit problem; this should soon change and meantime we have filled in the holes and will continue to do so as they appear.

Hole on 14th [Committee]

This has now been filled in.

Other courses are better [PY]

According to discussions with the Golf Club Managers Association, many East Anglian golf clubs are suffering from the six-week dry period, but we accept that, at this early stage, some are faring better than us.

An update on course equipment

A professional turfcare equipment consultant has carried out a full overview of our machinery and workshop facilities and we will be implementing his recommendations, which include purchasing a new greens mower.

FINANCE

We have received a good deal of financial support during Covid-19, ie: the furlough scheme (until the end of September); suspension of business rates (finishes end of July); temporary relief from interest payments on loans and HP (both now finished); and a CBIL loan. These have enabled us to keep the business going but they are, or were, short-term solutions. With this assistance coming to an end and other costs increasing as we start to re-open, we need to take a cautious approach. We must make sure that Forrester Park is financially sound.

We would like to say a huge thank you for the great support we have received from our members during Covid, it is enormously appreciated.

On the weddings and functions side, most of our 2020 functions moved to 2021 and many of them have moved again to 2022 so that the knock-on effect of reduced income is felt not only in those that 'never happened' but also in the fact that many have simply shuffled to prime dates for next year, thus reducing our potential income from new bookings.

CLUBHOUSE**When will the men's toilets be refurbished?**

The refurbishment of the ladies toilets has been long overdue and we are very pleased that this has now been carried out. We do have a finite amount of money; if the men feel that they would like money allocated to revamping their toilets rather than to the course they can request this.

Are we going to be shoved round the back all year round?

The short answer is 'no'. It is easy to forget the rapidly-changing guidelines which came and went last year, but the creation of the Members Lounge and the new stable door in the gents changing rooms were intended as a short-term solution to enable us to serve food and drink to comply with regulations without opening the whole clubhouse. In the event the Members Lounge proved reasonably satisfactory, the stable door has not yet been used.

Once Covid allows us to open up again, golfers will have use of the clubhouse and patio as before, albeit with reduced opening hours (more on this below). When functions are taking place, golfers will have use of the facilities as in the past – here is a list of functions as it stands at the moment:

26/06/2021	Wedding from 3pm
02/07/2021	Wedding from 5pm
10/07/2021	Evening party
17/07/2021	Wedding from 5pm
24/07/2021	Wedding from 1.30pm
07/08/2021	Wedding from 2pm
13/08/2021	Wedding from 5pm
14/08/2021	Evening party
21/08/2021	Wedding from 5pm
27/08/2021	Wedding from 3pm
28/08/2021	Wedding ceremony only at midday
28/08/2021	Wedding from 3.30pm
29/08/2021	Evening party
04/09/2021	Wedding from 5pm
10/09/2021	Wedding from 3pm
11/09/2021	Wedding from 4.30pm
17/09/2021	Wedding from 5pm
18/09/2021	Wedding from 5pm
24/09/2021	Wedding from 2.30pm

How come other courses have a full food menu and lots of staff? Why can't I get range balls outside opening times?

Running the clubhouse is a big financial drain and, in normal times, income from functions pays for a large proportion of these costs. Choices therefore need to be made about how the income we are receiving (at the moment mainly from you, the golfer) is best spent.

To maximise investment in the course we are trying to keep the clubhouse running costs to a minimum. We have shortened our opening hours, kept staffing levels low, reduced our food offering and introduced pre-ordering. We have also taken measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce admin costs. If you would like more details please ask.

We will make range balls available outside opening times if they are pre-ordered.

When will the kitchen and clubhouse hours be back to normal?

Our provisional re-opening plan, Covid allowing and subject to change, is as follows:-

From 17th May we will be re-opening the Members Lounge with complimentary tea and coffee as before and seating areas for groups of up to six. You will be allowed to enter the clubhouse in groups of up to six. We will be encouraging pre-ordering of food via the website (preferred) or on paper forms provided at the club. There will be a limited menu at this stage.

From 21st June the clubhouse will be serving food and drink. Opening hours will be shorter than in the past, but at weekends and on Wednesdays, if food and/or drinks are ordered in advance, staff will open specially for you. In the past we opened from 7am to 9pm in summer, with very few customers outside peak times; we want to avoid spending money on opening up the club when it could be spent on the course.

In summary, if you wish us to provide something, please ask in advance and we will happily do our best to deliver it.

What are the plans for the course?

Our intention over the next 2-3 years is to:

- Improve our water management scheme on the course, both drainage and irrigation;
- Continue to improve and update our course machinery;
- Improve the tees;
- Install a drainage system in the 2nd, 8th and 9th greens;
- Install a loo on the course.

I hope this is a useful update and that we can develop a good communication for the future.

All the best and I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Yours

Tim