

The 19th Hole

Innerleithen Golf Club Newsletter

March 2016



Upcoming Events

19 th March	Annual club awards ceremony. 7.30 in the Clubhouse.
26 th March	Captain vs Vice Captain
2 nd April	Ford Trophy
9 th April	April Medal
22 nd April	Rosie Bowl
30 th April	Jock Hailstones (scramble)
7 th May	May Medal
14 th May	Presidents Prize

The above is a small selection of available Gents, Ladies and Senior competitions. All upcoming competitions available via BRS.

Welcome!

Communicating with members is a key part of any golf club, and we welcome you to what we hope will be the first of many club newsletters.

As a small club run by volunteers, it is not always easy to 'get it right' all of the time. However, good communication is extremely important to us - we have recently refreshed the club website, we are growing our presence on social media, we aim to keep the noticeboards up to date, we are making increasing use of text messaging, and we will be looking to get articles into the Peeblesshire newspaper again.

This newsletter will add to all of that, ensuring as many people as possible get the information they need.

Please do feedback your thoughts on this newsletter, for example items you would like to see (or not!). Whether we continue this quarterly newsletter or not really depends on your opinion and how useful you see it, so please do get in touch.

Everyone should be receiving their membership renewal pack shortly, if you haven't already, which includes details of the membership structure for 2016, and information on our easy fundraising initiative.

Kind Regards, Innerleithen Golf Club Committee



Highlights: Captains message, updates on greens, house and finance for the year ahead, competitions, and how you can earn money off your membership.

Greens

We are pleased to be undertaking significant work to improve the 9th Tee and surrounding area this year. The intention is to create a new medal and gents tee further west of the current one, maintaining the same overall yardage. Whilst it seeds in we expect to remain on the current tee for this season. We are also looking to improve the scrub area in front of the tee by infilling and reseeding.

The other main change for this season is to discontinue maintenance of the path in front of the 5th hill, and instead the route across will be north of the dyke. Signs will be installed.

We are undertaking work to prune and remove trees around the course. The primary focus are those that block visibility of cars from the 8th tee. We are also looking to remove lower branches of the conifers between the 4th green/5th tee.

We are aware of the continued erosion of the riverbank by the 2nd tee, and are monitoring the situation.

Ditching work is underway around the 6th Green to divert water coming from the hillside.

Finally, bunker sand has been rebalanced, and the greens will be tined, fertilised and top dressed ready for the start of the season.

Keith Norman

Greens Convenor

Captains Message

A warm welcome to everyone as we approach our new season.

I have agreed to remain as Captain for a further 12 months, and am pleased to be joined by Raymond Caine as Vice Captain. I look forward to working with Raymond and transitioning the Captains role to him for 2017.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped out with the running of the club this past year, quite simply the club would not exist were it not for all of your efforts.

I would also like to thank those that have joined the committee for the first time. The club is always looking for help and assistance, no matter how small, so do please keep an eye out for requests of help.

We are working hard on our financial position, David and Callum are continuing to maintain a cracking course, we continue to recruit new members, and we have now come out of the water supply saga with our sanity intact (just!).

I am excited about the year ahead, and look forward to seeing you all on the course.

Play well! *Peter Irvine*

Treasurers Report

As we approach the beginning of a new golfing season it is perhaps a good time to review the financial challenges we faced last season and to consider what plans are needed to ensure the financial future of the club.

Last season we had a series of financial challenges facing the club, £12,500 was required to pay for a mains water connection to the clubhouse (EU regulations) and at least £10,000 was needed to replace green keeping equipment deemed beyond repair and with falling income from membership fees and bar sales a perfect financial storm was brewing. After failing to receive any grant aid assistance the club turned to its membership. The water connection was financed with a 5-year loan from a generous member. New green keeping equipment was financed by granting a life membership, which raised £10,000, allowing the purchase of a new Fairway and Rough-Gang mowers for £7,500 and £2,500 respectively. An additional £1500 was spent resurfacing the clubhouse car park after the construction work to connect the mains water connection and further £1500 was spend on the course to improve members golfing experience with new Tee markers, Green Flags, Flag Poles and Cups. I hope the membership will agree that we saw this investment produce the reward of the course in its best condition for some time.

Continued overleaf...

Treasurers Report Continued...

In looking forward to the coming season and the future two things are apparent, we need to increase our revenue and we need to create a sinking fund to allow for the replacement of green keeping machinery. In reviewing our membership fees we are already broadly inline with the other 9-hole golf courses in the borders, however we are significantly cheaper for visitor green fees. At the AGM in January members voted to keep membership fees static but voted to increase 9-hole visitor green fees from £10 to £12, this should increase our revenue by approximately £2,000 per year and meet our budgetary requirements for the coming year. Members also voted at the AGM to ask members for a £10 fee to start off the sinking fund. I would ask all members for their continuing support to keep this precious resource that is Innerleithen Golf Club. *Keith Dunn (Treasurer)*

Get rewarded with money off your Membership!

We are excited to announce a new trial rewards program for members. We are always keen to welcome new people into the club, and in order to help promote this, current members can earn £50 off their annual membership for every new member they recruit.

Full details are available from Keith Dunn (Club Treasurer).

Competitions

One of our desires this year is to see more of our members taking part in competitions. It is not all about the winning, it is a social event more than anything else, having a bit of friendly banter, and enjoy getting out on the course. Please do come along, even once in a while, the club is for you, the members.

New to the club? Entering our competitions is a great way to meet people in the club and improve your game. Entering your first competition can be daunting, but one of the great things about golf is it's handicap system, levelling the playing field. Medium and High Handicappers often win our competitions because of this.

One of the other concerns for first timers is who to book with - if there is a slot, put your name down! All current members welcome the opportunity to meet new folk and share a round with different people, you will not be stepping on anyone's toes!

In order to enter competitions, you must have a CONGU handicap - if you do not yet have this, simply enter the competition and declare at the start your round is "for handicap". Whilst you will not be eligible for any competition placements, three of these rounds gets you an official CONGU handicap, and you are on your way to becoming a better golfer!

Competition changes

We will be introducing a new 9 Hole Open competition on the 1st Friday of every month. Once the final details have been confirmed, we will update the noticeboards and website.

We are also making some changes to the summer eclectic. Whilst the format will not change, the cost will increase from £1.50 to £2.00 in order to provide an additional set of prizes.

Finally, we aim to be an inclusive, modern club and are pleased to announce a few changes on how we can better integrate the gents and ladies sections.

Ladies have been invited to play alongside in Saturday competitions, although because of the varying tees, the actual competition standings will remain separate.

We will also be looking to run the ABC and Ladies Championships semi-finals and finals at the same time.

Annual Club Prize Presentation Night is on Saturday 19th March, 7.30pm at the clubhouse.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible. We would like to know rough numbers for catering purposes, and a sheet is up on the main noticeboard.

Pace of Play

Slow play. It's the topic of conversation that just won't go away in virtually any clubhouse. The irony is that in an era when most of us are facing more time pressure than ever, a round of golf is taking longer than ever.

The R&A felt it an important enough issue to warrant a comprehensive pace of play survey published in 2015. Some of the results make for slightly surprising reading for those fearing the end of golf is nigh unless things change! While 60% of the 56,000 respondents felt they would enjoy golf more if it didn't take so long, 70% were largely happy with how long it took, and only 4% never happy. Pace of play was cited as only the third biggest obstacle to participation, well behind work commitments and family commitments, though all three are undoubtedly inter-related.

But even if 70% of golfers are largely happy with pace of play, clearly 30% are not. If pace of play is affecting the enjoyment of golfers such that they have little inclination to play more, or deterring newcomers from getting more fully involved, we need to look at every way possible of bringing down round times.

So what can be done? We've all read lists of contributing factors as long as our arms, so instead we hope the following hints and tips might go some small way to shaving a few minutes off round times:

- Keep up with the group in front of you is more important than keeping ahead of the one behind. However, please let faster groups through. If it comes at all, the call-through when players are searching for a ball seems to often come too late to be of any real pace of play benefit.
- Be ready to play your shot. Golf is not a race, so you don't have to be relentless in your pursuit of the finishing post. But you do need to be ready to go as soon as it's your turn rather than a minute afterwards.
- Keep pre-routine shots in check. If your routine involves assessing the yardage, carefully selecting your club, standing behind the ball with club out in front of you, partial practice swings away from the ball to groove key moves, then three more adjacent to the ball before finally hitting, you're unlikely to be the most popular playing companion, and unlikely to be helping overall pace of play.
- If in doubt, play a provisional ball. If you don't take a provisional ball and can't then find the original, the impact on your group's round time could be 10 to 15 minutes, factoring in the five-minute search and the long walk back.
- A lot can go wrong at the green in terms of pace of play, and it's doubly frustrating for those behind to have to witness the whole laborious process if the course beyond is clear. We've already covered being ready to play (putt) when it's your turn, but golfers will often leave their clubs in the wrong place for a speedy exit when everyone has putted out; they may cause delays by not taking their putter with them if they have to chip before putting; or they may even stand on the green totting up their score and marking their card while those on the fairway are waiting to play into the green.
- Mark cards at the right time. A group will arrive at the next tee, then spend a minute or two sorting out the scorecards rather than anyone actually stepping up and hitting a ball. Again, all the more frustrating if the group behind has to watch this being acted out with a clear fairway or green beyond! If there is bunching, move off the green, play your next tee shot, then return to marking your cards.

The above article used extracts from Golf Monthly Magazine.

2016 Committee

President – Mackie Fraser

President – Norman Smith

Captain – Peter Irvine

Vice Captain – Raymond Caine

Secretary – Terry Dewis

Treasurer – Keith Dunn

Greens – Keith Norman

Competitions – Vacant

House – Noel Dashwood-Brady

Mins Secretary – Kim Jackson

Committee – Tony Farndon

Committee – Arthur Neil

Committee – Craig Phaup

Committee – Ian Robertson

Committee – Gloria Smith

Committee – Andy Wodehouse

Volunteer – Bob Bullivant

Volunteer – Allan Dick

Volunteer – Colin McArthur

Volunteer – Ian Stewart

Visitor Checks

A small club such as ourselves greatly rely on the green fee income we receive. However, we continue to see visitors not paying their dues.

We would kindly ask members to help check visitors when you are on the course.

House

Water Water every where! Yes we finally have a mains water supply to the clubhouse. For 127 years we have been using water fed directly from streams running down from the hills behind the clubhouse. However some 18 months ago the local authority tested the water supply and found that it contained over the recommended amount of lead and other chemicals and therefore banned us from using this source. I am sure that many of you have stopped for a refreshing drink from the stream at the fifth. Alas no more. After a lot of jumping through bureaucratic hoops we received the necessary planning permissions and the installation was completed during the summer of 2015. We are now able to once again resume full use of the kitchen and bar facilities. We are actively seeking talks with the Mountain Bike fraternity for them to be able to use our facilities when they have major events in the forest around us. This could be a very good additional revenue stream.

During the course of last summer we suffered two attempted breakins but luckily the alarm system deterred the culprits. We have subsequently enhanced our security by installing a security webcam above the entrance to the club. This serves also to allow members to view, on line, the 3rd and 9th greens and give an indication of the state of the course. We hope to expand this to cover the car park during the next few months.

The BRS on line booking system has been running for over a year and has proved popular with both members and visitors. We are negotiating with local hotels to enable them and their guests to access the system. Whilst many visitors will wish to play Peebles and Cardrona we are uniquely placed to be able to offer them an additional choice, especially if they are looking for 9 challenging holes.

We have computerised our competition schedule and members can(must) enter their results directly onto the Handicap Master system from a terminal in the bar lounge

The clubhouse has weathered the recent storms well, with just half a dozen roof tiles needing replaced. However a redecoration is going to be needed within the next couple of years.

We have introduced some settees and armchairs into the bar lounge to give a more comfortable feeling and would welcome any suggestions from members for further improvements.

Noel Dashwood-Brady

House Convenor.

