

## **ROYAL AIR FORCE GOLFING SOCIETY**

### **MINUTES OF THE 2020 VIRTUAL AGM HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 7.30 pm**

#### **ITEM 1. OPENING REMARKS**

The Secretary welcomed 54 members – a record number in recent times - to the Society's first virtual AGM. He had received regrets from no less than 65 members. This was the 75<sup>th</sup> consecutive AGM since the society reformed after World War 2 in 1946. The format follows that of recent AGMs held at Newark Golf Club after the Summer Meeting. The AGM documentation had been emailed to 300 members. Of these, 83 had responded - considerably more than expected.

In anticipation of being unable to hold a normal AGM, on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020 the committee discussed each agenda item and in a second Zoom meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> June made those decisions needed to take forward various plans. The organisation of the society remains sound, the active membership is sufficient to sustain our excellent fixture list and our finances enable events to be subsidised, albeit rather less than in recent years as the cost of golf rises.

Until one hour before the AGM the Secretary had been aware of just 3 members who had contracted Covid-19; all have happily recovered. But very sadly he had just been informed that Harry Griffiths, our previous secretary, had died from Covid-19 complications on 17 Nov. Our thoughts are with his family. Harry was a much loved and highly respected Secretary for 16 years and many members wished to express condolences to his family. On a much brighter note, we congratulated Mark Cooke on becoming the 2020 Lincolnshire Seniors Champion.

#### **ITEM 2. MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD AT NEWARK GOLF CLUB ON 4 JULY 2019**

The minutes of the 2019 AGM had been distributed. The committee had approved them, as did 30 of the 51 members present at the 2019 AGM. As no objections had been raised the minutes were approved unanimously.

#### **ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING**

The only Matter Arising was the on-going planning for the Centenary Fund, which is addressed in Item 7.

#### **ITEM 4. ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019**

The 2019 accounts had been circulated. The Secretary highlighted salient points.

a. The Society remains solvent. The surplus shows £1962, of which £1350 resulted from the £10 centenary levies. The stock of knitwear ran down, partly in anticipation of purchasing items featuring a new logo for 2021.

b. Page 2: Most income and expenditure is similar to that in previous years but of note is the decrease in income from subscriptions. Subscriptions form the main source of income. The only other source is the £15 levy charged to members who play in the matches for which we are not charged green fees. At next year's AGM the committee will propose a strategy for increasing our financial strength; action is not needed now. All the clubs have welcomed us again next year and will mainly charge similar prices. Though we expect to be welcomed in 2022, the Secretary would not be surprised if the cost of green fees then showed a sharp increase as a result of the clubs' loss of revenue this year.

c. Page 4 shows that as the Scottish Tour was cheaper than planned in 2019 the ring-fenced fund had risen to £930. The cost of the 2021 Tour will be reduced appropriately.

d. The committee has approved the 2019 accounts and as no objections had been received in the 82 responses the minutes were approved unanimously.

#### **ITEM 5. VACANCIES ON THE COMMITTEE**

Committee members each serve a 3 year term before seeking re-election. This year, Neil Flather, Forbes Smith and Jethro Tull are due for re-election. They are all content to continue for a further term. The remaining members of the committee proposed that the 3 members be re-elected for a further term and as there were no objections in members' responses the committee's motion was approved unanimously. The Secretary advised that we are always on the lookout for new committee members, ideally young ones! He encouraged members to contact him if they would like to know more about how the committee functions. The task is not arduous. However, the Secretary wished to take the opportunity to tell members that this year the committee has been more active than ever before; he had been impressed with how it had debated various issues and made sound decisions. On behalf of the members he congratulated the committee.

#### **ITEM 6. THE FIXTURE LIST AND GENERAL UPDATE**

The Secretary provided a general update. Despite the gradually reducing membership, almost all who have joined in the last 10 years (150 or so) are active golfers. This augurs well for sustaining our excellent Fixture List, though as the cost

of golf rises inexorably, some venues may simply become unaffordable. However, the Secretary felt that the Society is better placed than many as we have developed such good relations with the various clubs over so many years. The Meetings, the Matches, the Scottish Tour and the Competitions were again very successful in 2019. Under Dave Marshall's leadership our Cat 1 golfers won the prestigious Brent Knoll Bowl for a record 12<sup>th</sup> time.

This AGM is essentially a report on what happened the preceding year, but this was an opportune time to brief events this year. Every event up to the end of August was cancelled for Covid-19 reasons and at one stage it seemed that the entire year would be a write-off. But the 3 final Meetings were all successful, albeit with just one round of Stableford. 33 players were at Fulford, won by new member Tom Dobbins, 37 took part in the Autumn Meeting at Wellingborough, won by Q Dixon, and 34 took part in the Winter Meeting at Sandy Lodge, won by Tim Evans. In the circumstances, such large entries were most encouraging. The new venue of Wellingborough was highly rated. We also managed to fit in matches against Moor Park, Henley, Sonning & the Seniors.

Our inaugural match against Brokenhurst Manor, to be run by Phil Sperring, unfortunately came a cropper of the virus. We have 2 other new Match Managers. Jethro Tull has taken over the Henley fixture from Basil Evans. This match was played recently resulting in Henley retaining the Danesfield Cup. It was Henley's only club match this year. Mark Foreman has taken over from Les Parker in running the North Hants match. We are grateful to Basil & Les for running these matches so well for so many years, even though our opponents at these 2 clubs continue to be the toughest to beat. Dates have been booked for all events in 2021 as indicated on the Fixture List. Team Managers will welcome early bids for slots.

Looking ahead, if by next Spring Covid-19 restrictions preclude 2 rounds of golf at the Meetings, or indeed normal catering, the Secretary was confident that we could hold Meetings as successfully as we did this Autumn, albeit with just one round of individual Stableford. The matches will depend on procedures in place at the various clubs. For the Scottish Tour, the courses are booked for 11-14 May and it is hoped that Kinloss Barracks will accept us as normal; they have assured us that they will if they possibly can. 32 potential tourists recently confirmed that the option of staying at the Stotfield Hotel opposite Moray Golf Club in Lossiemouth would be acceptable, if necessary.

## **ITEM 7. SOCIETY CENTENARY – 2021**

Details of Centenary events will appear in the 2021 Newsletter due to be posted in mid to late January. The planning assumption is that golf by next May is back to

normal. The flagship event is at Moor Park (MP) on the 9<sup>th</sup> June. The maximum capacity at MP is 92 golfers in 23 teams of 4 for a 0930 Shotgun Start, with space for 20 non-playing diners for a meal at 1530. The Coxmoor event on 11<sup>th</sup> August will have a similar format of a Team Stableford with the best 2 scores to count. This will be a 2-tee start from midday and an evening meal at 7pm. We shall know by the 31<sup>st</sup> March after the entry forms have been received if a 3<sup>rd</sup> venue is needed. If we are oversubscribed for either MP or Coxmoor, the allocation of slots will take into account the extent to which members have contributed to the society over the years and their contributions to the Centenary Fund over the last 4 years.

The Centenary Fund should have raised approximately £7500. Most of this will be spent in 3 ways. First, by inviting to MP the representatives of those golf clubs with which we have enjoyed long-lasting relationship. The committee identified 11 such clubs and 5 societies, some of which we have been playing since 1930 and many since 1970 – these long-standing relationships have been crucial to us benefitting from subsidised green fees, which would otherwise not be affordable. Second, we shall subsidise the cost of the Centenary events to our members. Third, we have been able to purchase a wide range of excellent prizes for all our Meetings.

The committee meeting in May considered various options for refreshing our logo to mark our Centenary in style. They approved the logo shown on the Agenda for this AGM which is now embossed on a range of high quality golf accessories, including umbrellas, fluid bottles, towels, scorecard holders, tote bags, caps, holdalls and shoe bags. Some of these items needed a minimum order which exceeded our requirements for prizes so the Secretary was grateful for the many responses which confirmed their popularity. The prizes will be presented at all Meetings throughout next year and will also be available for purchase in January.

The committee also commissioned Glenmuir to embroider our logo on their excellent range of knitwear. Prototype versions have been much admired. The full range of Glenmuir products will also be available to purchase next year at extremely attractive prices. Order forms will be despatched with the Newsletter in January. Money will be needed in advance with the orders. The committee is confident that members will be impressed both by the prizes and the Glenmuir products.

## **ITEM 8. SOCIETY TIE**

The committee had debated at length the merits of replacing our existing green tie, but could not reach a clear decision. Traditionalists pointed out that the tie has remained broadly unchanged for at least 6 decades, everyone has one, it is easily identified and respected by all our opponents and as the opportunity for wearing ties is diminishing, why change? Those who favoured change pointed out that the

Centenary is the perfect time to commission a new tie, on a more appropriate blue background, with multiple motifs featuring our new logo, which is far more representative of our RAF heritage.

After canvassing opinion at our few events this year the question was put to the membership. The 83 answers were as follows: 9 abstained (not minding which outcome was selected); 12 preferred the green tie; and 62 preferred to task the committee to research a new tie on a blue background. On the basis of such an overwhelming majority the Secretary declared that a new tie will be designed. In fact the committee is well down this road. Green ties will continue to be perfectly acceptable at all our events.

#### **ITEM 9. WEB-SITE**

The web-site goes from strength to strength. Steve Baxendale has done a brilliant job and of course it is still work in progress. He uses a variety of social media to attract many visitors and new members to the site, which so far has more than paid for its annual fee of £80. The Secretary strongly recommended viewing the section on the first 100 years. Steve would be grateful for any items, particularly photographs of noteworthy achievements or significant events.

#### **ITEM 10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Although the Secretary announced that the next AGM was scheduled to take place at Newark Golf Club on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021, in the light of the overwhelming success of the 2020 Zoom AGM, the committee had since reconsidered this decision and favoured holding another virtual AGM. This would enable more members to participate and would shorten an already long day at Newark. A suitable date would be selected and advertised in the 2021 Newsletter.

At this point, AVM Stu Butler, one of our Vice-Presidents, voiced the thanks and appreciation of the membership to the Secretary for his unstinting work on behalf of the Society.

The Secretary declared the meeting closed at 8pm and thanked those present for their interest and continued support of the society. He then un-muted the participants; several joined in informal discussion.