



ROYAL AIR FORCE GOLFING SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE 2021 VIRTUAL AGM HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 7.30 pm

ITEM 1. OPENING REMARKS

The Secretary welcomed 35 members to the Society's second virtual AGM. He had received regrets from 33 members including our President who sent his best wishes. This was the 76th consecutive AGM since the society reformed after World War 2 in 1946. The committee had met 4 times in the 12 months since the 2020 AGM. They had mainly discussed detailed arrangements for the Centenary events but had also considered all the agenda items prior to this AGM. The AGM documentation with the committee's recommendations had been emailed to 320 members.

Introducing the meeting, the Hon Sec described how the year had been remarkably successful, despite the impact of Covid restrictions; the society now has a new tie and a new flag, over 100 members have items of Glenmuir clothing bearing our logo, all the Meetings were well attended and our 2 special Centenary events at Coxmoor and Moor Park were superb.

ITEM 2. MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON ZOOM ON 18 NOVEMBER 2020

The minutes of the 2020 AGM had been distributed. The committee had approved them. As no objections had been raised, the minutes were approved unanimously.

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING

The only Matters Arising concerned the Centenary events and the Society Tie which would be addressed at Items 8 and 9.

ITEM 4. ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

The 2020 accounts had been circulated. The Hon Sec highlighted key points.

- a. The Society recorded a surplus of £3219, of which £770 resulted from the £10 centenary levies. The fund had again transferred £400 to the Centenary Fund. The major unusual expense was the procurement of £3953 of prizes featuring our logo for the 2021 season.
- b. Page 2 showed that income and expenditure were both much lower than in previous years as fewer events were held. An important item is the revenue from subscriptions, which is our main income stream. These again showed a slight decrease. However, the Hon Sec reported that 25 new members had joined this year so he anticipated that this trend would be halted. The only other source of revenue is the £15 levy charged to members who play in the matches for which we are not charged green fees. This levy had been unchanged for at least 20 years and the Hon Sec thought that the time was approaching for the amount to be reviewed. But before doing so the committee would consider the impact of collecting the additional £10 which is addressed at Item 6.
- c. Page 4 shows that the ring-fenced Scottish Tour reserves were £930. The cost of the 2022 Tour will be reduced appropriately.
- d. As the committee had approved the 2020 accounts and no objections had been received, the accounts were approved unanimously.

ITEM 5. VACANCIES ON THE COMMITTEE

Committee members serve a 3 year term before seeking re-election. This year, Malcolm Middlemist and Tom Hanlon have decided to stand down. Malcolm has served on the committee for no less than 19 years and Tom for 12. Their contributions over these periods have been immense. At this stage the members recorded their appreciation with much applause. The committee had identified Nigel Dowdall and Tim Evans as 2 worthy replacements and commended them to members. Nigel is the Match Manager for the fixtures against West Hill and Royal Cinque Ports and has strongly supported society events despite this has being his year as Captain of the AERO GS. Tim has been a stalwart supporter of the Scottish Tour and has taken over the coordination of the matches against Sonning. These replacements will substantially reduce the average age of the committee. As no objections had been received to the committee's recommendations, Nigel and Tim were duly elected onto the committee.

One of our few rules and regulations is that the committee elect their chairman. The committee had unanimously agreed to elect Peter Bedford. Peter has served on the committee for 9 years, he plays in many of our events and runs the match against the Senior Golfers. He is very well qualified to take over from Malcolm.

At this stage the Hon Sec departed from the published agenda. He described his discussion with Malcolm about taking over the chairmanship from Ray Piercey.

Malcolm had assured the Hon Sec that he would give it his best shot for at least 5 years. This discussion took place 11 years ago! Since then Malcolm has held the position with distinction. Until very recently he has supported nearly all our meetings including the Scottish Tour and has run the matches against Sonning for many years very effectively; his initiative set up the splendid fixture at Woodhall Spa. His tall figure, striding down the fairway, is well known to all of us. Our committee, with the wholehearted endorsement of our President, has decided that in recognition of Malcolm's outstanding leadership over 11 years and his tremendous support for the society for no less than 65 years, we should make him an Honorary member of the society – only the 9th such person to be awarded this recognition. The Hon Sec invited the members to unmute themselves to record their approval of the committee's recommendation and their appreciation of Malcolm's superb contribution to the society. In response, Malcolm graciously accepted his elevation to Honorary membership and thanked the members for their support and companionship over the years.

ITEM 6. THE £10 LEVY

Raising the £10 levy for 5 years was crucial to enable the society to fund our Centenary year in style. The levy had raised approximately £7000 for the Centenary Fund. The Hon Sec described how the cost of golf is rising significantly as many golf clubs have waiting lists and are experiencing pressure to allocate more tee times to their members. Accordingly, many clubs are either turning societies away or are charging much higher rates. Our annual subscription has remained at £20 for 18 years. The committee had judged that this was no longer adequate to subsidise events and provide suitable prizes. As the Hon Sec had found the process of collecting the £10 levy relatively straightforward, the committee proposed that a levy of £10 should continue to be raised. As no objections had been received, para 13 of our rules would be amended as follows: the final sentence regarding £1 subscriptions no longer applies and will be replaced by 'An additional annual levy of £10 is to be paid on the first occasion that a member participates in any society event'.

ITEM 7. THE FIXTURE LIST AND GENERAL UPDATE

The Hon Sec described how the early 2021 fixtures had been affected by Covid constraints, but over the year the impact was far less than he had feared. All 9 Meetings – a record number – were held more or less as planned. The Brent Knoll Bowl had been rearranged and David Marshall had again led his team to victory, beating 6 Army Inter-Service players in the final. The Scottish Tour went ahead, amazingly, despite all hotels in the area being closed and the Moray Firth being UK's

Covid hot spot at the time. We are very grateful to 39 Engr Regt at Kinloss Barracks for again providing 28 members with accommodation.

The Hon Sec was more confident that the influx of new members would enable us to sustain the excellent Fixture List. Our numbers are rarely capped for the Meetings; with the exception of the Thames Valley Meeting (TVM) they have all been well-attended. He encouraged members to enter the TVM, perhaps with a guest; this is a pairs event over 27 holes at Studley Wood near Oxford where the course has always played well, it is an informal day and Johnny Johnson's wonderful mosquitoes await the winning pair.

Turning to the matches, these are all on good courses, some of them are on great courses. For the more remote ones such as at Rye, Royal Cinque Ports and West Sussex, we have struggled to field a full side. The Hon Sec encouraged members to contact Match Managers early. New members are always welcome. The 2022 Fixture List was still in draft. A major change is that our Championship Meeting will move from Frilford Heath. Our experience there this year had been less successful than usual and their prices were due to rise substantially. However, the Hon Sec was thrilled to report that for 2022 we had secured Moor Park as a venue; we would play 1 round on both the High and West courses. The RAFGA were keen to move our match around England; John O'Gaunt in Bedfordshire was a possibility for 2022.

Our Match Managers do a terrific job. The Hon Sec had omitted to mention how Jim McKenzie had successfully run the match at Rye for many years. Jim has supported the society most conscientiously for almost 60 years. Kevin Burston had gallantly stepped into the role.

ITEM 8. SOCIETY CENTENARY

The Hon Sec then briefly reviewed the key aspects of the Centenary. We now have a splendid new flag which has been funded almost entirely by generous contributions from Luffenham Heath GC, Royal Cinque Ports GC and the Senior Golfers Society. Our logo is also prominent on items of Glenmuir clothing bought or won by over 100 members.

The first Centenary event was held at Coxmoor which was a new venue for the society. It could not have gone better. The club's staff, the course and the catering were all outstanding. The cost came in under budget. The winning team, with a terrific score of 91 points was Robby Boyce, Bernie Vickers, Dave Fairclough and Joe Bradshaw. 2nd with 87 were Gary Cook, Mick Ford, Paul Gibson and Phil Gough, just ahead of Mick Roche, Paul Gibson, Geoff Glover and Jon Corlett. Nearest the pin prizes were won by Martin Old, Dave Fairclough, Tom Dobbins and Paul Simmons.

The venue has been booked for 2022 with the same format of a team competition with the best 2 scores to count. Members will be able to nominate other members of their team.

Plans for our big day at Moor Park had a rocky start. The original date of 8th June was soon ruled out by Covid constraints. The re-arranged date of 21st June was fine until 14th June when the government delayed the release from restrictions! So another 120 emails went out to members and guests. Throughout this hassle Moor Park were brilliant. Their Events Coordinator was exceptional and the club was clearly determined that our special day would be just that. The 28th September was not without incident as a petrol shortage complicated journeys. Nevertheless, all 96 golfers arrived, most of them on time, and enjoyed a stunning day. The committee was grateful to Naomi Bedford and Elaine Carr for acting as registrars; their efficient registration eased the bottleneck of golfers arriving simultaneously and allowed the committee to dispense mementoes. The High course was in great condition and many good scores were recorded, with Ian Robinson's hole-in-one on the 18th being the highlight. Other nearest the pin winners were Sam Macleod, Si Stevens and Ian Robinson (again). Many teams fancied their chances but the winners led by Gordon Varley and Farrukh Bajwa and including 2 guests from the RNGS deservedly won with an amazing score of 94 points. In 2nd place with 86 points were Ian Robinson, Mick Ford and 2 members of the AOGS. 3rd were the team of Phil Hopkins, Si Stevens, Ollie Whyatt and Rick Lipscomb with 85.

A glittering array of our silver trophies made an impressive display. The lunch and wine were very well received as were our Centenary slate coasters. We then all listened entranced as first our President, Sir Patrick Hine, and then his good friend David Harrison gave 2 wonderful speeches. Judging by the fulsome thanks sent by almost all the 20 guests and 95 members, the day was a great success.

Martin Riddiford was one of those who could not attend. His grandfather, Cecil Hayward, was our first Hon Sec and the Founding Father of the RAFGS. Martin had donated a small silver bowl won by Cecil (playing off +3) in 1921. The committee decided that this should be presented to the player who had contributed most to the team's performance in the Brent Knoll Bowl. Our President presented it to Dave Marshall who has organised our scratch teams with distinction for many years.

Our splendid day came in on budget at £10,000 – less than £100 a head including 20 guests. So the whole Centenary Fund has been spent marking the year just as we had hoped. Well done the committee!

ITEM 9. SOCIETY TIE

The 2020 AGM authorised the committee to proceed with the design of a new tie. This was no simple matter. After several exchanges of designs we purchased 152 distinctive ties which retained similarities with our green tie but featured a more representative eagle and was on a blue background. The ties have proved very popular and have all been disbursed; more will be procured. The green tie will be a perfectly acceptable alternative.

ITEM 10. WEB-SITE

As many members know, our web Maestro, Steve Baxendale, suffered a bleed on the brain early in the year. We nearly lost him. After months of convalescence he is making slow progress. Work on the web-site has therefore stalled, but Steve is a determined chap and if his rate of recovery continues we hope that he will soon be able to update it. His work might include the introduction of a members-only area, so members were encouraged to continue to access the site.

ITEM 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Although no AOB items had been tabled, the new Chairman, Peter Bedford, wished to place on record the members' appreciation of the sterling work conducted by the Hon Sec throughout the year on behalf of the Society, including all he had done to make the Centenary so successful. The members joined in applauding the Hon Sec for his efforts.

ITEM 12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next AGM will take place on ZOOM at a similar date in November 2022.

The Hon Sec declared the meeting closed at 8.10pm and thanked those present for their interest and continued support. He then un-muted the participants; several joined in informal discussion.