

**MINUTE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE LADIES' GOLF CLUB TROON
ON THURSDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 11.00 AM**

The Captain welcomed the members to the 137th Annual General Meeting of The Ladies' Golf Club Troon and advised them of the safety evacuation procedure.

Before the business of the meeting the Captain had the pleasure of presenting the prizes, assisted by the Vice-Captain. Donna Jackson won the Club Championship and, having sent in her apologies, asked the Captain to read her Vote of Thanks on behalf of the Club. As Club Champion she wished to thank the Captain, committee, members for their support including all her Championship competitors and the caddies.

PRESENT: Captain in the Chair and 127 members.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from 124 members.

ITEM 1: The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting for 27 September 2018, which had previously been circulated were approved and signed. Seconded by Grace Kennedy.

ITEM 2: Captain's Report.

It was with great sadness that the Captain reported on a number of member's deaths:

Mrs Iris Smith, Honorary Life member, Mrs Eileen Griffiths and Mrs Mary Kollack. The sympathy of the Club was extended to their families and friends.

The Captain said how her year had suddenly flown past, at the start she could not imagine getting through all the things to be done, but with the support of Vice Captain Helen, a great committee, and helpful advice from Past Captains she had enjoyed the journey.

Elizabeth Simpson on Ground and Handicap along with Fiona Brawley and Julie Neal have worked tirelessly and efficiently to ensure the smooth running of all competitions and also the compilation of our syllabus, which takes a great deal of work. Along with the members of G&H all committee members take turns in manning the 1.45pm ballot April-September and the 11.45am ballot October-March, checking scores cards and closing competitions on Fridays and Saturdays. Next year will be a challenging year with the new handicapping system coming into play but the Club will be well prepared; Irene Smith, Fiona Brawley, Jean Sloan and Elizabeth have all attended recent seminars.

In Finance Caroline McCreath and her team of Lesley Ferguson & Gillian Brodie have used their clear and level-headed professionalism to look at all aspects of the Club's financial position for this year and many years to come. The Captain commended Caroline for her careful consideration of all aspects of the Club's position.

On House Andrea with Eileen McDonald and Alison Fairbairn, have made sure that our clubhouse is always kept to the high standard to which we are accustomed. As the year progressed the newest member on house Alisoun Fairbairn began to realise that the distance she had to travel from home to the club was just not practical especially through the winter months so with regret she asked to stand down from committee. Therefore, in June, Jean Sloan agreed to take her place. Although Alisoun stepped down she has still been working with Julie Neal to catalogue all the trophies for insurance purposes and for the Club's own records.

Throughout the year Andrea had to deal with many staff issues in a very calm and measured way. We were very fortunate to be assisted by Helen Stockton from Royal Troon who provided staff over the Christmas period due to staff injury.

The flowers throughout the club are always lovely and Captain thanked all members who volunteer on the flower rota. Eileen would be very grateful if any ladies would like sign up for future weeks. It does not have to be fancy, just fresh!

The Captain thanked Andrea and her committee for making sure that at all events the Clubhouse runs smoothly and because of this is the envy of many of our guests. She commended Andrea on the beautiful flowers on the AGM top table.

As the year went on it became clear that golf and particularly Ladies Golf throughout the country was struggling to maintain numbers and in particular to attract younger members, who would be the future of clubs. The Club has only had 4 new members this year, although at present there are two on the board and three in the nomination book, compared to an average of 10 per year in the past. The Captain reminded members that subscriptions and entry fees are our only form of income. Scottish Golf has been initiating new incentives such as 'Get Into Golf' and special taster sessions at many clubs to try to encourage new interest. With our Club having restricted time on the course and Royal Troon themselves hoping to attract new female members, it is not so easy for us to implement such initiatives.

With the problem of ageing membership and rising costs of maintaining the clubhouse as well as the relationship with Royal Troon, a Futures Group has recently been formed which will work outside the committee to look at ways to ensure the future stability of The Ladies Golf Club. The Futures Group consists of Annie Howie, Elizabeth Simpson, Jane Gravid, and Grace Kennedy, and will be chaired by Beth Patterson. The Captain hoped that members will see this as a positive step.

On the subject of ageing membership, the Captain had the pleasure this year to host an afternoon tea to congratulate Honorary Member and Past Captain Mrs Pat Cairns Smith on the occasion of her 80th year as a member of our club. Mrs Cairns Smith joined the club in 1939 when she was aged 17. There is also an Honorary Life member Mrs Dorothy Sanson, who was 105 years old last month.

After a great many meetings and discussions with the architect plans are now in hand that the committee feels cover all the points in our brief. With planning permission now in place, which is valid for 3 years, it just remains for the Building Warrant to be granted then next year's committee will be able to decide how they wish to proceed.

Throughout the year several events were enjoyed by members.

Seminars regarding the new rules of golf were well attended and Captain thanked Rona Walker for simplifying these new rules for members.

The evening event held on 4th July was a great success, music was provided by the Dalrymple Ukulele Orchestra.

The annual outing this year was to Kilmacolm Golf Club was very successful, with good play, good food and weather

The recent trip by bus to the Solheim Cup at Gleneagles was enjoyed by over 40 members, on the best day weather wise. Well done to the European Team on their victory.

The evening mixed foursomes this summer have been well attended and only one evening was cancelled due to very wet weather, everyone still met for supper, and had a really pleasant social evening. One of the mixed events was held on a Sunday late afternoon and was a great success.

Two very popular invitation Greensomes were held, one 9-hole and one 18-hole, the weather was favourable on both occasions.

The Annual Matches with both Portland Men and Royal Troon, the Portland Salver and McFadzean Trophy were played in great spirit and although once again we were defeated in the Portland Salver, there was an honourable half in the McFadzean. Captain thanked all the ladies who gave up their time to play in the matches.

The Helen Holm competition was played in some excellent weather and was won by Pia Babnik from Slovenia. Although the Prizegiving was held at Royal Troon this year, The Ladies Golf Club is still to the forefront of this competition and remain the custodians of the Helen Holm Trophy. Captain thanked all those who helped with the scoring.

The Deuchar Cup in August, a most enjoyable day despite some heavy rain over the last couple of holes, was won by Aileen McGregor and Martin Cheyne and the prize for best net score went to new member Ana Farrington and Jack Paton. All players enjoyed a light lunch in The Ladies' clubhouse before play and cocktails in the Alisa Lounge at Royal Troon for the Prize Giving. Many of those playing enjoyed dinner and a very sociable evening at Royal Troon.

The Club Championship and Bronze finals were played in August on what must have been the windiest day of the year, with one torrential downpour as the players were on the 16th green. With no chance to get into their waterproofs they were both dripping when they left the green! Donna Jackson defeated Gillian Kyle by two holes to become the Club Champion 2019. In the Bronze Final Valerie Cram defeated Margaret Morrison in a well contested match. Considering the weather, there was a very good turnout of supporters for both matches. The players and caddies enjoyed hospitality in the clubhouse after the match.

As usual, we have in addition to our weekly bridge clubs, held three very popular bridge parties at which the ladies have very generously donated to the Captains Charity for the year, Hansel Group.

The Captain's Charity Day was blessed with the very best weather and also contributed to the total. The Captain thanked all members for their very generous contributions, many of whom, although not playing on the day, still gave generously. Last week a cheque for £2,535.44 was presented to Agnes Paton, Fundraising Manager for Hansel Group.

On 23 July the committee travelled by bus to Formby for the biannual match with Formby Ladies. The weather was amazing, to the extent that Captain had to sit down on the path between holes as she thought she was going to faint. The hospitality the committee received from the Ladies was outstanding. Formby Ladies won the official match on the Wednesday.

At the beginning of the year the committee had a fun round on Royal Troon and Captain commented that this is another good reason to come on committee.

At the beginning of this month the Captain vs Vice Captain day match was planned, where all members who have helped with the many aspects of running the club are invited to play. Unfortunately, the weather was not the best, so fun and games in the upstairs lounge were held followed by a delicious early afternoon tea.

The Greenlees Team, ably led by our Greenlees Captain Annie Howie, has once again been performing at the very highest level. The Club is extremely grateful to all the team members who give of their valuable time to represent it, several of whom use precious holiday time from work to be available. This year the team has received very smart new polo shirts and gilets. The team finished a close second in Division One with Cathkin Braes taking first place

At the beginning of the year the Club hosted the Mary McKenna Trophy which was played over the Portland Course between the Scottish Veterans Team and the Irish Veterans Team. The Scottish Team included Donna Jackson, Lesley Lloyd and Gillian Kyle. The ladies held an evening dinner in our club on the Saturday evening to which the Captain was invited. Second day of play saw the Scottish Veterans win 6 ½ -5 ½. The Scottish Captain Ellie Whyte and all the ladies were most complimentary of the catering and hospitality, for which the Captain thanked Andrea and her team.

As you all know this year has seen a change in the position of the under 12 section with a great many of the members now attending the Royal Troon School of Golf , membership of which includes tuition from the Royal Troon Professionals. Originally in earlier discussions regarding the forming of such an academy it was the intention to include ladies from the club, but when final plans were decided the only involvement would be from the Professionals. As coaching can no longer be provided, the cost of membership was reduced to a nominal £30 and the day was moved from Sunday to a Monday in the hope that some of the youngsters would still enjoy a more relaxed introduction to golf. Sylvia and her team of helpers Lynda Laing, Sheila Pickles, and Doris Roy have held Eclectic, putting and Birdie Tree competitions. Each week trophies are played for and handed down to the weekly winners and there is also the ever popular Greensomes with adult partners. The season ended with a Prizegiving Afternoon Tea. Out of the 24 juniors the Mini Craighend Champion is Aurora McCrossin and Champion on the Craighend is Emma Laidlaw. Thanks go to all the team but especially Sylvia who really encourages the children and makes them all feel special.

Nora McCrossin has taken over care of the 12-17 age group. The Captain handed over to Nora for a quick update.

At present, there are five girls in the 12-17 years section. There is a new member, Megan Docherty who plays off a handicap of 4. The other girls are Cristina McCracken, Rachel Hart, Rachel Hodge and Sara McIntyre. Both Rachels have played very little this year but they are still keen and intend to keep up their membership.

The achievements of the other three are as follows:

Megan Docherty:

Qualified for last 16 at Scottish Girls Amateur U18

6th in St Andrews University girls

6th in Stephen Gallacher Vase

Qualified for last 16 in St Andrews Links U23

3rd in Junior Tour event at Lanark

2nd in Junior Tour event at Bruntsfield

Asked to play in Italian Girls Open

Captain Scottish Schools v English Schools

Qualified for Race to Machrie final

Over the summer Cristina has played regularly in the Royal Troon Junior medals and has reduced her handicap from 25 to 22. She has also played in quite a few outside junior competitions.

Sara McIntyre moved up from the young Junior Section this year. She is keen, enjoying her golf and has a handicap of 30 over the Portland junior course. She plays with Emerald-Rose, Royal Troon member.

In summary, there is a problem with numbers, but committee will continue to try to make membership of this club attractive to the younger girls, especially in view of the competition from Royal Troon.

The Club is very fortunate in having many very talented golfers in our ranks and this year has been no exception, Connie Jaffrey and Jane Finnie both played for Ayrshire County in the County Jamboree at Prestwick and Ayrshire went on to win the Scottish Counties Championship.

Gillian Kyle played for Renfrewshire County Team at the Jamboree at Prestwick, Gillian is Renfrewshire County Champion and was the overall winner of SVLGA Patrick Rosebowl played at Blairgowrie and her score of 76 was the best scratch enabling her to win the Lyon Picture Trophy for the West Division. Gillian, along with Donna Jackson, and Lesley Lloyd played in the winning team against the Irish Vets over the Portland course.

Donna Jackson, the new Club Champion, represented the Scottish Vets in the Jamboree at Northamptonshire County Golf Club. She also finished runner up in both the West Vets Championship and the Scottish Seniors Open

Championship and will be representing Scotland in the Senior team in the Senior Home Internationals at County Sligo in October. Donna also had a hole in one at Williamwood earlier this year.

Lesley Lloyd is the West Vets Champion. Eilidh Briggs represented Scotland in the European Ladies Team Championship.

Some members are also involved in the administration of many other clubs, Gaynor Russell, Sandra Wright, and Margaret Miller serve on The Ayrshire County Association, Pearl Orr is Honorary President of Renfrewshire Ladies County Golf, Gillian Kyle is their junior Secretary, and Beth Paterson is deputy chair of Ladies Golf Union Championship Limited and is also a board member of CONGU.

The staff have worked hard this year under difficult circumstances due to staff shortages which will hopefully be a thing of the past. It was very sad to hear last month that our former head waitress Libby Goslan lost her fight against cancer, she was such breath of fresh air in our dining room. The Captain, along with many members attended her funeral.

Captain thanked all the committee for making her year so enjoyable but most of all Secretary Ann Christie, who in her calm way seemed to be able to multitask in the most remarkable way, never being flustered with all the various members popping in to pay money, ask questions or just to say hello.

Lastly I thank you all for your support and encouragement throughout my year.

Item 3 on the Agenda is the submission of Accounts for the year to 31 March 2019. Caroline McCreath, Finance Convenor gave her report. She presented the financial report on the Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2019.

Preparing for today, Caroline remarked that she had re-read a number of recent reports by her predecessors and was struck by how similar the messages have been every year. Rising costs, declining numbers of members (despite the Open bounce), appreciation of a surplus - however small - and a plea to Members to make more use of the Bar! This year ending 31st March 2019 is no different.

Income

2018/19 saw a surplus of £4,808. Subscription income at £264,476 was up 2.6% on previous year and entry fees up £8,215, but appearances can be deceptive.

Last year Finance reported that in y/e 31st March 2018 the number of Ordinary Members at 290 was the lowest since 2014/15 (also 290). At the beginning of this financial year the number of Ordinary Members was reduced by 11 through death, resignations and changes of category bringing the total number of Ordinary Members down to 279. Since then only 2 new Members have joined the Club and, although there are a 2 further names on the Board, Caroline reported that today Ordinary Membership is now at its lowest in the last 20 years or so at 281.

Bar sales were again slightly down and though Bank Interest was up on 2018 - purely because a fixed term savings account matured – normal savings interest rates remain pitifully low. Reserves are protected by spreading them across a number of accounts, which again means some of the higher rates are not available.

Donations are therefore more important than ever, but as can be seen from the Accounts - donations at £1,980 were down from £3,550. There are a small number of regular and very generous donors to whom committee is, as always, extremely grateful and Caroline said a particular thank you to those Honorary and Honorary Life Members whose donations have enabled the Club to do a variety of things for the benefit of all Members which would not otherwise have been possible.

Gratuities were also slightly down on the previous year – and Caroline reminded Members that the Club’s policy is not to tip individually but it is open to every Member to add something at the time of subscription renewal which can then be divided up among all the staff, including those who operate behind the scenes in the Club.

In addition, the Gratuities are also used to provide a small thank you at Christmas in the form of gift vouchers to Billy McLachlan and his team of greenkeepers.

The Ladies Club is the recipient of valuable behind the scenes free help from Royal Troon. Billy McLachlan and the green keepers not only keep the putting green and front hedge in good order, but have also undertaken more major tasks which would have cost a lot of money if outside contractors had been employed – e.g. excavating the dangerously rotting iron railings by the pavement, allowing Bill, the handyman, to fill in the trench with gravel to ensure the safety of the public on the pavement.

Additionally, this last year Royal Troon loaned the Club their professional cataloguer, Jane Ferguson Jamieson, who spent many long hours in the back office cataloguing all the archives, providing the Club for the first time with complete records of Minute books, competition results, photographs, paintings and memorabilia, etc. With several well publicised and destructive recent fires at Clubs such as Glasgow and Machrihanish, the purchase of a proper fireproof safe for all the Archives is an urgent requirement.

Expenditure

The two major elements of expenditure are the annual green fees we pay to Royal Troon – last year increased by 2.5% - and staff costs/wages. These continue to rise in line with changes in the minimum wage rates and pension legislation, but key staff need to be rewarded appropriately when they take on additional responsibilities.

Despite making use of the buying power of Scottish Golf Buying Group, utility costs, updating of technology and safety systems (e.g. installation of CCTV) as well as professional fees (including legal fees for the work done on Carol Clelland’s revised contract) have all impacted on the Club and will continue to do so.

Prizes & Trophies – showed a one off increase of £2,443 - 57% - due the purchase of replacement stock of Medal spoons.

The Planned Programme of Maintenance Survey undertaken in 2017/18 made it clear there were a number of areas in need of serious attention. Having reviewed the Surveyors’ recommendations, only some of the most critical items were undertaken in 2018/19 such as repairs to the outside of the roof (£700), properly insulating the inside of a large part of the roof (£2,500), re-painting the flagpole (£1,604). Other urgent repairs (such as cracked drains - c.£4,400) have had to be delayed to financial year 2020/21.

In addition, there will always be unexpected items, e.g. last year the mixer (£567), this year both the cooker and a freezer had to be replaced - and the boiler has already gone beyond its normal term.

There is absolutely nothing glamorous in any of this, but it is all essential to keep the Clubhouse in working order. Caroline commended Managing Secretary, Ann, Andrea and her House Committee, and handyman Bill for their tireless work in finding ways to keep things going and agreeing with good grace when Finance had to say ‘No’.

Five Year Plan

Given the speed of change nowadays forward plans need constant revision, but better to have a plan and amend it than no plan at all. Over this last year a great deal of time and energy has been spent on financial planning and modelling, not just because of the project, but to help guide the Committee in informed financial decision making for the Club. Lesley, as Finance Convenor, and Gillian as her Deputy with their combined business and financial experience will be well able to look at things in an objective and clear headed way.

Caroline thanked Ann for her help this last year – without her patience, excellent command of the financial systems and readiness to sit down and work things through - and above all good humour – Caroline remarked it would all have been much harder .

Reserves

At the end of March 2019 reserves were £338,088 - including fixed assets of £36,000 and £95,255 the balance of the VAT windfall from HMRC to be used for benefit of all Members.

Spending on the Project up to 31.3.2019 was limited to £6,744 (inc VAT) on architect's fees. The £30,000 from the R&A is shown as a liability because it is ring fenced for the installation of a ramp.

In essence, the Club has uncommitted reserves of £206,000.

It is often said that this Club is well-off, but this can only remain the case if Committee is prudent in the preservation of the reserves to cover the kind of unexpected expenditures detailed earlier and the subsidising of shortfalls in subscription and entry fee income which come with a declining membership.

With no questions from the floor, Caroline proposed the adoption of the accounts. Seconded by Nora McCrossin.

Item 4 on the agenda is the subscriptions for 2020/21. These have been posted on our notice board in the Clubhouse and are as follows:

Ordinary.	£945+RT increase
Under 24's.	£466+RT increase
Country.	£ 408+RT increase
Non-playing & Assoc.	£480
Children under 12.	£30
Juniors-12to17.	£150
Locker rents.	£50

Captain proposed the adoption of these subscriptions. Seconded by Mandy Graham.

Item 5 Proposed amendments to the Constitution.

Proposal 1

Rule 6(a)(vi) Country Members

Delete the existing rule and substitute:

Country members may play on 10 occasions per annum and this may include participation in competitions other than those involving multi-rounds or knock outs”

The Captain explained that the purpose of this proposal was to enable country members, if they wished, to take part in any Club competition and to allow them to win any associated prize.

Mrs Sara-Ann Bottomley advised the meeting that she objected to this proposal on the basis that Country Members did not have any voting rights in the Club and that they paid a much reduced subscription.

The Captain then asked for a show of hands from those who were against the motion (36) followed by a show of hands from those who were in favour of the motion (37). In total, barely half of those present had voted, and it was clear that there was discomfort and general confusion among the members present as to what they had actually been asked to vote on. One or two additional comments were made from the floor, but following further clarification on the motion from the Chair, and on the basis that the membership then clearly understood the motion before them, the Chair called for a further vote which, in the event, provided overwhelming support for defeating the proposal and hence not making any amendment to the constitution regarding Country Members.

Proposal Two

Rule 6(b) (i)2) Junior Members

Delete the words “of 36 or less”

This proposal is to align our Constitution with the eligibility rules set out by Scottish Golf for the Scottish Golf Medals which from 2019, include an additional division for players with handicaps in the range 37-54

The Captain Proposed the adoption of this proposal, seconded by Gail Brown.

Item 6 Any Other Competent Business

None

Item 7 Election of Independent Accountant

The Captain proposed Morag Bogle as the Independent Accountant for the forthcoming year. Seconded by Lynda Pearson.

Item 8 Election of Committee

In accordance with rule 2(c) Mrs A D Church, Miss EA Simpson, and Mrs DJ McCreath retire at this time. No nominations having been received to fill the places of the retiring members of the committee, it is proposed to fill the vacancies by appointing Mrs S Ingles, Mrs C R Kyle, and Mrs D J Lochhead. In accordance with Rule 2(d) Mrs J Sloan, who was co-opted on 1st May to replace Mrs A Fairbairn, also retires at this time, and it is proposed that she should be re-appointed to serve for the remaining unexpired period of office of Mrs Fairbairn – i.e. a further two years ending in 2021. Seconded by Rona Lockie

Item 9 Election of Captain and Vice-Captain

The Committee Members during the past year have all worked very well together and have enjoyed all the planning and debating of all things Club related in the hope of keeping everything running smoothly for the benefit of all the members. All contribute different skills to things they never knew they were capable of and hopefully provide a fun and supportive environment for all the members.

The Captain remarked that she was supported by Helen Convery who as Vice Captain, always had a voice of reason and practicality, with plenty of humour thrown in for good measure. She is sure that the new committee with Helen at the helm will be safe hands for the future of the Club.

Captain proposed Helen Convery as the Captain for 2019/20. Seconded by Sara-Ann Bottomley

Captain Helen Convery proposed Elizabeth Simpson as her Vice-Captain. She had previously served on Committee as Ground and Handicap Convener. Seconded by Julie Mackie.

The three new committee members were welcomed onto Committee and thanked for their enthusiastic agreement to serve the Club.

Gillian Kyle, for Ground and Handicap
Sandra Inglis for House
Deborah Lochhead for Finance

The Captain advised that her chosen charity will be Mary's Meals. She advised members that The Committee has been considering where the Club stands in the current situation in the world of golf, particularly Ladies Golf. There are changing conditions and trends as Valerie had described. In our own Club, membership is decreasing and ageing, income is decreasing and expenditure increasing. The Clubhouse needs attention, and Royal Troon is making changes as they admit Lady members.

The Club is in a relatively healthy position at the moment, thanks to the prudence of earlier committees, and many members love it as it is. However, she said that we must be realistic and not be complacent. Changing trends must be considered and how to best take the Club forward to remain viable in the coming years.

The recently formed Futures Group will look into aspects of Membership, finance, the relationship with Royal Troon and will make suggestions and recommendations to the Committee. Captain said that they hope to set up a consultation/conversation with members to explore ways of ensuring the sustainability of the Club for all members while respecting its ethos and traditions.

She felt sure that members will give the committee as always, their cooperation and support. She looks forward to the year ahead with optimism.

Past Captain Freda Bunch gave the Vote of Thanks.

The meeting closed at 12.25pm