



THE LEICESTERSHIRE GOLF CLUB

NEWSLETTER

April 2020

Maintaining Your Course During Lockdown

The Leicestershire Golf Club wishes all its staff and members stay safe and healthy as we continue our fight against the deadly CVD-19 virus. During this extended lockdown, a skeleton staff of 3, **Course manager** Chris Lewis, Wayne Bown and Nathan Root have been working tirelessly to ensure the golf course is maintained to as good a standard as possible, in readiness for the return of members.

Chris's latest report covers the following:-

Drainage repairs: *The problematic drainage system on the practice ground, 18th fairway and 14th have now been repaired. All of the issues were caused by tree roots blocking the drains. Top soiling and seeding of the repaired areas has been completed. Rainfall would now be very welcoming to aid in the seed germination.*

Greens: *Verti cutting of the greens has recently been carried out with the focus being to start preparing the putting surface in readiness for play once government restrictions are lifted and the golf course can be reopened. The application of liquid fertilizers and wetting agent has been carried out as required, to the greens. Greens height of cut will be lowered shortly to its usual Spring / Summer setting.*

Fairways and Semi rough: *The fairways have recovered well from the hot summers of 2018/19 . The work of scarification, hollow coring, over seeding and topdressing carried out during the course closure has aided their marked improvement.*

'Divoting' *carried out by the clubs volunteers has also vastly improved their playing surface.*

The semi rough has been cut on a weekly basis. The height of cut has been recently lowered to its usual setting for this time of year. Tees and tee banks, bunker banks etc. have also been maintained on a weekly basis.

Bunkers: *The bunkers will be in need of maintenance when the course is reopened for play. They have basically been used as sand pits for children to play in over the lockdown period so will need raking and edging as soon as the Furloughed greens staff return back to work."*

Chris concludes "All other areas, usually maintained regularly around the course will once again be brought back to their usual standard once staffing levels are back to full capacity. I would personally like to thank the Furloughed members of greens staff for their understanding with the clubs situation during the lockdown period and look forward to their return. I would also like to thank the retained greens staff members for their hard work during this challenging time."





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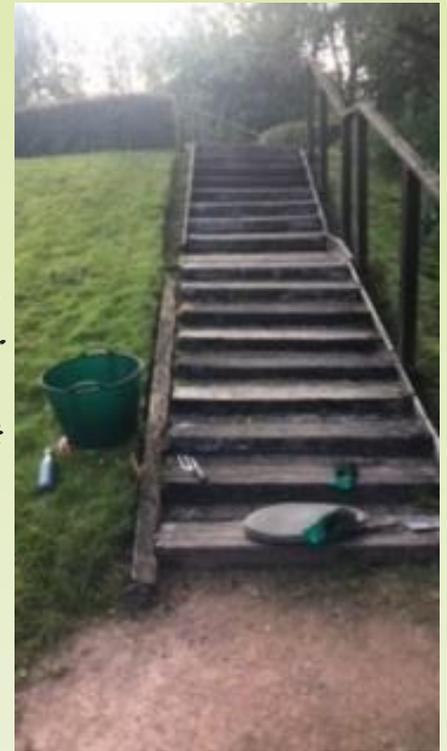
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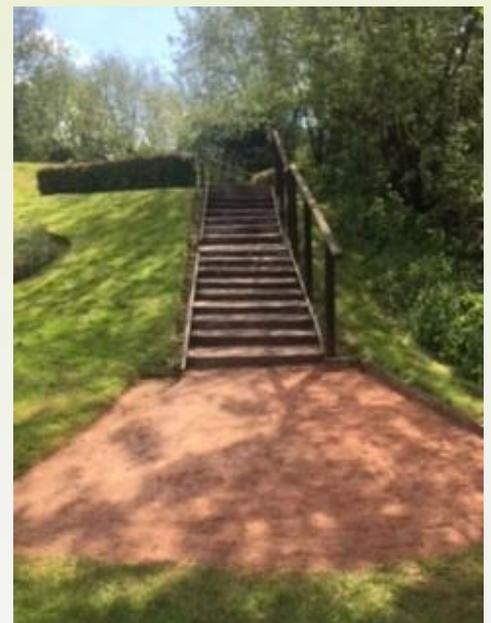
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Chair of Greens, Paul Donaghy has been working tirelessly throughout the lockdown with Course Manager, Chris Lewis and his staff. He states *"I hope members have enjoyed reading Chris' report above. I would like to send a personal thank you to all our greens staff during this difficult time. Our primary concern is the safety and welfare of our staff. To reduce the risk of infection, a number of measures have been put in place including increased washing/wiping of machinery and assigning of individual machines. Our staff will continue to work and produce the best course possible for our return to play. It must be remembered however that we are losing a considerable amount of working time on the course, during a peak growth period. Clearly there will be a positive impact on the fairways of having reduced play, particularly in high wear areas and we continue to fill the existing divots and seed where required, using volunteers as appropriate."*



In conclusion, I would like to reassure members that while we practice or play golf, the staff are doing all they can to get the course in good order for when we return to competitive golf. The R&A, BIGGA and England Golf have stated that essential maintenance should be done on the course and within those limits we are working to maintain the expected standards."

As soon as the green light was given on Monday 11th May to re-open the course, Paul organized a work gang of members to tend to the flower beds, weeding the tee-boxes, edge cutting, including bunkers and cleaning of steps.



Many thanks to Chris, Wayne, Nathan and Paul, including his gang of volunteers!



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WORKING ON THE FRONT LINE

TLGC member Tim Green (pictured right), a recently retired orthopaedic surgeon is seen working as a volunteer hospital porter during the fight against the virus. Great work Tim and thanks go from everyone at TLGC to all our members currently working on the front line.



Many other members are active in the NHS, the care sector and other key worker roles including Phillip Sell, Richard Power, Andy Rickett, Mandeep Johal, Paul Player and Parminder Kalsi. **Club Captain** Graham Warwick semi-freed from golfing commitments has returned to a part time role in the NHS. Graham states “ *We have all missed our regular golf fixes but recognise the need for the current restrictions. I do not envy the government's difficult decisions in trying to balance the risks to health and lives against the economic, social and psychological effects of the lockdown.* ”

England Golf, the PGA and R&A lobbied government hard in an effort to get some form of golf restarted and this was confirmed in the announcement on 11th May. We had been working behind the scenes to put together a detailed protocol for a return to golf taking into account national guidance and adapting it for our own club. This was updated and published to members late on 11th May to guide us through the restart 2 days later.

We envisage that there will be quite a demand initially and our plan is for a phased return starting with some social golf and progressing to competitive golf if the guidance proves to be working in practice. I would like to thank the volunteers who have acted as starters over the first 5 days of the restart.

Finally, I did not envisage my captain's year turning out like this. But if we all hold steadfast and support the club, I am sure we will come through. I still look forward to playing golf with as many members as possible later this year (although fewer than I had planned!).”

Thank you Graham and the team who worked with you, for keeping members well informed through the difficult process of lockdown. We especially loved the Benny Hill impersonation!



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President's Message

Clive Smith, President of TLGC. *“Wednesday 13th May is an auspicious day to be penning these few words because thankfully most of us, with effect from today, are now able to return to the game we love.*

Inevitably we all rue the fact that play has not been possible during the lock-down period. But if we all diligently abide by the recent instructions issued by our Captain, Graham Warwick, on behalf of the General Committee, there is now no reason to look backwards.

I want personally to thank our members warmly for their loyalty and support during these uniquely difficult times for us all. Subscription income is the corner-stone of our financial well-being as a Club, and I am delighted that a significant majority of members have chosen to re-join despite everything.

However I do not want to be simplistic in suggesting that we are out of the woods by any means. Many of our other revenue streams, most notably green fee income, will be hit hard. There is also considerable uncertainty about when we shall be able to resume catering and clubhouse services, and we shall not proceed until it is absolutely safe to do so. As you would expect, work is already underway to consider and prepare as best we can what we might be able to offer.

I would like to thank all the members of the General Committee, who have worked tirelessly over recent weeks to secure our Club's future. Many of us have had more Zoom-style meetings than we can even remember! I can honestly say that we have left no stone unturned, and that we have consistently been at pains to assist members suffering special hardship.

We shall continue to communicate regularly with members as and when we have greater certainty about the shape of things to come. But in the meantime may I wish you lots of very enjoyable golf and continued good health.”

Senior Section

Senior Section

All six events for the **Seniors Winter Series** were completed successfully, with a couple of weather affected events re-scheduled just in the nick of time before Lockdown! The current leaders are Parminder Kalsi and the ever-present Peter Nuttall, both on 7.0 points, closely followed by Balvinder Hoonjan on 6.75, and Peter Crewe and Tony Mendes, both on 6.00 points. All to play for gentlemen when golf resumes in the summer.

Seniors Winter League - No group had completed their quota of matches before the lockdown. However, as many groups were close to finishing their quota, the Seniors Steering Group has decided the closing date for the event will be extended after golf resumes.

All **Seniors Inter-club Matches** have been cancelled until the end of June. And news of any inter-club golf now is subject to further notifications from England Golf. While the **Seniors Away Day** at The Warwickshire GC originally planned for 8th June, has been **PROVISIONALLY** rescheduled for 28th September! Fingers-crossed! Seniors Captain, Kanti Patel states: *“Though we can't put a date on when golf resumes without restrictions, I very much hope that our monthly stablefords will resume very soon! In the meantime, stay safe.*



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Meet our New General Manager

The Leicestershire Golf Club extends a very warm welcome to Simon Collingwood, who will join us officially on 3rd August, 2020 as General Manager.

Simon, lives south of Lincoln, is married to Georgina and they have 2 daughters, Hollie, 18 and Sophie, 14. Simon has not managed to get them involved with golf, as yet, with their preferences for art and craft. Like many of us, Simon has been using the lockdown to catch up on a long list of things he has been putting off for a very long time!

Simon joins us from Newark Golf Club, where he has been Company Secretary and General Manager for the last 10 years. Prior to that he was at Driffield Golf Club in a similar position for 3 years, joining them from Boston West Golf Centre, where he was Head Coach and Duty Manager.

A very accomplished golfer, with a current handicap of 1, Simon is a past Captain of the Lincolnshire Professional Golfers Association and was selected for the England Golf National training Squad. A winner of the prestigious Lagonda Trophy, played for at Gog Magog GC, in 1996 – previous winners were Lee Westwood (1992), Luke Donald (1997), Gary Wostenholme (1992) and Andy Sullivan (2010) to name a few! Members may remember Andy Sullivan played in a couple of our Winter Series earlier this year. Simon says he was disappointed not to get to ride in the Lagonda!

A golf professional for 8 years, Simon regained his amateur status after a wait of 2 years back in 2007 when he decided to move into golf management. Awarded a handicap of 2 then, he now plays just a few qualifying rounds a year to keep his handicap. Asked how he maintains a 1 handicap, Simon states *“I spent a lot of time in my younger days on the practice ground and know my game very well. I was a very good chipper and putter back then, not so much now, but it does not take long to get back in the groove. I would like to get back to Scratch and my ambition is to one day shoot my age!”* Simon will be happy to step in, if our Scratch team are ever short of a player!

Simon has played TLGC just once, sometime ago and remembers the unique design of our clubhouse from that visit. He says *“I liked the nice undulation of the course and when I visited recently it looked in very good condition. I was amazed to hear of the longevity of the Course Manager and his deputy! I am looking forward to playing the course again, especially the 2 new par 5’s.”*

While his knowledge of TLGC is limited, Simon says many people were very complimentary of TLGC and its excellent reputation. He is looking forward to sitting down with the staff, both as a team and individually – his experience in F&B as a licence holder will complement the excellent work of Simon McNeil, our Catering Manager and assist our young team who work behind the bar.

A keen cyclist, Simon however needs a target to get him in the saddle! So many of his rides are long, including London to Paris and 100 mile rides for Charity. He is also a keen walker and has walked the length of Hadrian's Wall in 4 days. With a sister in Wymeswold, Simon is familiar with the route to Leicester, especially after he had to make several trips with his mother last year, to visit his father at the Leicester General. He is not worried about the daily commute, stating *“It's not a problem as long as the destination is where you want to be!”* Very true Simon, especially as one is The Leicestershire and the other is Home, with a sister to call in on the way!

Simon was pleased to hear we had an excellent Junior Section at TLGC stating, *“You need a great team of people, both professionals and volunteers. The volunteers are absolutely essential to help the kids develop and keep them engaged”*. We certainly have excellent volunteers at TLGC, Simon.

A very keen follower of sport, Simon is a great cricket fan who has been to many international matches at Trent Bridge. He was very interested to hear we had a good rapport with Leicestershire County cricket and the Leicester Tigers, the annual golf matches and from whom we get season tickets for distribution among our members. For his sins, he follows Spurs – the many Leicester City supporters at TLGC may have to convert him!

Simon says *“I was absolutely delighted to receive the news of my appointment at TLGC. I have always operated an open-door policy for staff and members and look forward to meeting as many members as possible, on the golf course and in the clubhouse. I do not play as much golf these days as I would like, but hope to participate in the Captain/Pro challenge, Charity matches and when invited to play by members”*. Welcome to The Leicestershire Golf Club, Simon!





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And in other news...

- General Manager Will Bevan has kept us entertained during lockdown with videos of trick shots and informative facts about our club. Last month he arranged a 4 day virtual quiz on Zoom, covering Golf, Arts, Literature, Music, History, Science, Sport and Leisure. A good opportunity to get those brain cells working again and more importantly a chance to see some familiar faces! The number of households taking part varied from 4 to 9, with only 2, the Bucktin's and Lobo's lasting the distance. The Bucktin's currently lead 3-1! Great work Will.
- Simon McNeil, currently on furlough, has been sending us some of his mouth-watering recipes for scones, Simnel cake (yummy), Beef Stroganoff, Banana & Peanut cake, Chocolate Fondant (words fail me!) and Apple Tarte Tatin (scrumptious). Simon has also offered advice to members and we cannot wait to get him back into the kitchen at our clubhouse. Many thanks Simon and we look forward to seeing you and your staff soon.
- With the clubhouse still closed, the club's Pilates class has continued on Zoom with Charlotte Pochin-Hawkes, a pilates and sports injury specialist. Members participating will be ready to go when golf resumes in earnest.
- On the 8th May, 2020 the country celebrated VE day. We remember, with gratitude those members and staff who served in World War 2 while our club was used by the Army and Civil Defence. In preparation for a possible invasion, trenches were dug and posts erected on the fairways under the guidance of the RAF, to prevent gliders from landing! When the war ended, ***"the club was left with a course much ravaged by the Army, the sheep, and the plough, and a clubhouse the worse for wear by the Home Guard!"*** Thankfully, when we returned to the course on Wednesday 13th May 2020, we were not met by the same scene!
- Finally, just as we were going to publish this newsletter, we were given the good news we could return to golf. First to tee-off on Wednesday 13th May, were Peter Nuttall and John Vesty. Members are delighted to be back playing again, stating ***"The General Committee and staff have done extremely well to open the course immediately"***. ***"It's great to see other faces again!"*** ***"The protocol for return to play was well written and easy to understand – thank you to all involved"***. ***"Appreciate the use of starters to keep us safe and remind us to maintain our distance"***. ***"I had to dust-off cobwebs from my golf bag"***. ***"The course looks in great condition – love the professional stripes on the fairways"***. More in next month's newsletter. In the meantime, enjoy your social golf, stay alert and healthy.

