



March 2009

Dear Fellow Member,

The end of the winter is in sight and every golfer is becoming alert for the two key signals that herald the golf season. These harbingers of spring are anticipated keenly by us all. One is of course the Masters Tournament in Augusta and while this is a very welcome boost to our golfing spirits, the signal we crave to really whet our golfing appetites is "The Captain's Newsletter". Well here it is, those long winter days' waiting for this cheery bulletin to pop through your letter box are over. "No wait", don't put it straight in the bin, for contained within this message somewhat like "The Da Vinci Code" is a mysterious secret, which if you can decipher it could reduce your handicap by several shots!!! (Disclaimer by Cowglen GC; Representations made within that last paragraph are not necessarily supported by the Council!!!)

And so to Business

I would like, first of all, to give my best regards and wishes for the forthcoming season. In the past couple of months since becoming Captain, I have had cause to reflect on the Chinese greeting "May you be blessed to live in interesting times". Well they don't get much more interesting from a Golf Club perspective than these; Climate Change, Credit Crunch, Worldwide Recession, Ageing Membership demographics, Oversupply in the local golfing market. To steal a phrase from a famous movie – "Who you gonna call?".

Well ever the optimist I am going to reflect on all the good things that we have, A great course, which we own, a young talented Green keeper who is energetic and enthusiastic about further improving our playing pleasure, a highly respected Professional who is a major asset to our Club, a Clubhouse, which while perhaps needing a little tender love and care, is solid and spacious enough for our needs, a long serving Club Master who along with his support staff provide great service to our members, a young and enthusiastic Caterer now getting well into her stride and last, but indeed most important, while it may be ageing a little, a Membership that is friendly and energetic. I am pretty sure that measured in these terms against any other Club in our area, we would be well on top.

Course

The course has had much work done to it over the winter period with Michael and his team working hard on additional drainage, the new tees at the 7th and 9th, several paths and all the other clearing and tidying that the season demands. The heavy frosts experienced in January and February has kept us off the greens more than we would have liked, but I am sure that we all appreciate that it is better to be a little cautious to ensure we do not cause any damage that would affect the main playing season. Michael and the Green's Committee are beginning to put together a five year work programme aimed at continuing the improvement we have seen in the last few years and when formulated it will be publicised to the members for their comment and input. The more we see of Michael's work and vision, the more we appreciate what an asset we have captured for the Club.

Clubhouse

The recent letter seeking opinion on the small levy needed to assist in the funding of the Clubhouse upgrade resulted in overwhelming approval as follows: -

CLUBHOUSE & CLUB MANAGER

Giles Young
310 Barrhead Road
Glasgow G43 1AU
Tel: 0141 632 0556

PGA GOLF PROFESSIONAL

Simon Payne
Tel: 0141 649 9401

CATERER

Elaine McLaughlin
Tel: 0141 649 6003

SECRETARY & TREASURER

Ronald J. G. Jamieson
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Sent Out	619				
Returned	248 (40%)	Yes	205 (83%)	No	43(17%)
No Reply	371(It was indicated that a non reply would be considered a yes vote)				
Yes	576 (93%)				
No	43 (7%)				

As not only the total, but the total returned show overwhelming support, the Council will now move quickly to finalise the plans and quotes to bring to an EGM, which will allow the Membership to review and hopefully approve the work programme.

The Locker Rooms project which is self financing from ongoing rental income will also be presented for approval at the meeting.

The last years' very poor golfing weather has impacted sharply on our bar and catering business and I hope that a better Spring and Summer will result in Giles, Elaine and their staff seeing more of the members using the facilities. It is I am afraid and economic fact of life that if we do not have sufficient business flowing through these areas it is harder and harder to keep them in place, so please be aware that as a Membership we need to support those staff by using their services.

The Council is very well aware that rising fees are not popular and therefore we have developed several initiatives designed to increase both membership numbers and paying visitors. We have altered the rules regarding Member's visitors and also allocated more tee times, at of course appropriate periods, for visiting parties. We have developed brochures to encourage both Membership and Visiting Parties and these will be distributed via direct drop and media inserts during April. This will coincide with an SU initiative in the week of 7th April encouraging golf membership. As part of this effort we have reduced the entry fee and I would encourage you to alert your friends and colleagues to these opportunities.

Social Scene

We continue to struggle in this area and like many other clubs and societies we see a diminishing support for events. I am aware that there are many factors at play that are not within our control.

We will try again in spring and summer with a low key music evening, which Elaine our caterer will complement by special pre-event menus. The last two major functions, the Burns Supper and Ladies Dinner were both resounding successes. For those of you who have not sampled our Catering recently do please give it a go.

I will end by recording on behalf of myself, the Council and I am sure all our members, a big vote of thanks to immediate Past Captain, Andy Burnside for the tremendous amount of time, effort and commitment he has given our Club. Thank you Andy.
Best wishes for a great Golf season

Frank Brown, Captain