



FORTROSE & ROSEMARKIE GOLF CLUB – SPRING NEWSLETTER 2017



Welcome to the first newsletter of the 2017 season by the Club Council. We hope you find it informative and we would welcome any comments that you may wish to make via the Club Secretary (Mike MacDonald) – secretary@fortrosegolfclub.co.uk

1. COURSE MATTERS

(i) THE HEAD GREENKEEPER

Mark Campbell, Head Greenkeeper, has handed in his notice as he is taking up a new job in Germany. Council would like to thank Mark for his hard work during his time with us and wish him all the best in his future career. The Council has already advertised for Mark's replacement and we hope to have a new head greenkeeper in place before the end of May.

(ii) GORSE REMOVAL

Members will have noticed that a great deal of work this winter has gone into gorse removal following the clear views made from last year's consultation meetings and that this should be a priority (particularly over the first four holes). Feedback on this exercise would be most welcome as there are plans to continue gorse management works over subsequent winters. Special thanks are due to Willie Gray, who provided the labour and machinery for this work to be carried out, greatly assisting the work of our own staff.

(iii) COASTAL EROSION WORK

Coastal erosion work was carried out along the side of the 6th and 7th holes during the winter thanks to a grant from Sportsotland. The contractor (GF Job) has done a terrific job again with input from our own greens staff. Thanks must also go to Phillip Thorn and Chris Huggett for the work they put into this project for the long term benefit of the golf course.

(iv) COURSE VOLUNTEER WORK

A number of improvements to the golf course have been made by volunteers under the guidance (and practical input) of Alistair Tait. A comprehensive minute of a recent volunteers meeting is available on the website in the 'Members Area' and then 'Greens Matters' from the drop down menu. The minutes list the numerous tasks completed and those currently in progress. This includes new signage, improvements to the course seating, marker posts, fence repairs, divoting and litter collection. If there are any more members out there who may wish to volunteer their services they should contact Mike MacDonald (Club Secretary) or Richard Carey (Vice-Captain) who are the volunteering co-ordinators.

(v) ROUGH MANAGEMENT

The Club has recently purchased a brand new Wiedenmann Super 500 flail mower. This machine flail mows, scarifies (fairways included) and collects the cuttings.

This is a great labour saving machine which means that the rough throughout the course can be cut regularly during the season where required. The Club Council researched the major investment thoroughly on the members' behalf and had a very impressive on course demonstration of the machine before a decision was made to purchase. The same machine is currently being used by Castle Stuart, Royal Dornoch and Nairn Dunbar Golf Clubs so we are in very good company. The machine cost approximately £28,000 and was affordable thanks to the sizeable VAT repayment from HMRC.

(vi) BUNKERS

Due to the coastal erosion and gorse removal work being the priorities over the winter period, it has not been possible to initiate a bunker improvement programme (with the exception of the first fairway bunker short of the 7th green). However, over time, it is intended to lower the faces and/or raise the bases to the following bunkers which have been identified as the most problematic from both an access and playability point of view:-

- Hole No. 2 – Front Right Greenside.
- Hole No. 6 – Left Greenside (widened).
- Hole No. 8 – Front Middle Greenside.
- Hole No. 9 – Front Middle (short of green).
- Hole No. 13 – Front Right (furthest from the green).

No doubt members will wish to contribute their own opinions on these matters!



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(vii) NEW GOLF BUGGIES

Three new golf buggies have been delivered to replace the existing ageing and worn out ones we currently own. These are being rented from the MTS Group in Glasgow from March to November. The buggies will prove to be more reliable and cut down on the increased repair costs which we have encountered of late.

(viii) CHANONRY POINT

A meeting to discuss the traffic issues at Chanonry Point took place on Friday, 17th February 2017 in Fortrose and involved community representatives, local residents and Highland Council representatives. The Golf Club was represented by the Captain, Vice-Captain, Club Secretary and Past Captain.

Unfortunately, there was very little in the way of practical proposals from the Highland Council and it was clear that the Council were not in a position to spend any money on traffic management solutions, seeking instead to enlist community volunteers to police the traffic throughout the summer months. The Club's representatives were clear that this was not a practical solution to the problem and we await (possibly in vain) further proposals from the Council. It is regrettable but the situation at Chanonry Point seems unlikely to improve this summer so members will need to exercise extreme caution even though we are insured under the clubs new insurance policy.

(ix) PRACTICE RANGE MATTING

The Club has of only last week purchased the practice range artificial turf/matting used at Castle Stuart Golf Links as they saw the need to replace it this season! The matting will extend some 20 metres along the length of the practice area and reduce problems caused by mud and general wear and tear. This will give members and visiting golfers the option to play from the artificial turf and/or to play from the grass when in the practice area. The artificial turf will be laid professionally thanks to John Jack (who has also laid the concrete bases for some of our on-course seating areas of late).

2. HOUSE & SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

(i) McBAIN'S CATERING SERVICE

The Captain and Lady Captain met recently with McBain's catering to review the service and provide members' feedback from the consultation meetings and the AGM which was held in November. Members had asked for a 'golfers snack menu' as a priority and this will now be introduced from Monday, 10th April 2017 for the season ahead.

The new light bites menu will run from 12.00-17.00 and the new breakfast roll menu will run from 11.00-16.00 each day in addition to the other menus currently in operation.

It is hoped that this will complement the excellent restaurant lunch and evening meals options which are proving to be extremely popular with members, their guests and visiting golfers.

(ii) SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Thanks to the sterling efforts of Colin Fraser, Graeme Sutherland and their very able assistants in Val Mitchell and Shona Sutherland the Club has run several fun competitions and a quiz night over the past two months.

These have all been a great success and have filled the clubhouse during the off-peak season (not to mention increasing our bar income). The Club Council is very grateful to the members who have supported these events and made them all such a success.

3. CLUB COUNCIL FOR 2017

Club President – Rossie MacDonald

Club Captain – Chris Skelton

Vice-Captain – Richard Carey

Lady Captain – Mrs Annette McArthur

Lady Vice-Captain – Mrs Rosemary Stallard

Greens Convener – John Donaldson

Match & Handicap Convener – John Jack

House & Social – Colin Fraser & Graeme Sutherland

Junior Co-Ordinators – Morty Ross & James Fraser

Council – Ms Anne Sangster

NOTE – The Black Isle Open Foursomes Championship takes place on Saturday, 15th April 2017 (36 Holes Qualifying) with the match play stages to take place on Sunday, 16th April 2017 (Scratch & Handicap Sections).