



Communications Group

(On behalf of the Management Committee and Club Members)

Newsletter March

2024

Dear Members

This is the first Newsletter of 2024, and there's already plenty happening. The appointments of a new General Manager, and secretarial and Pro Shop support, welcome the way to the new season.

The course is looking remarkably good for this time of year, and there are plenty of events to report.

In this Edition

On the Course
New General Manager
Women in Golf
Members' Meeting
Captains' Events
Seniors' Section
Load of Balls
Let Us Know

On the Course

- Although we have had closures and temporary greens over the winter, members hopefully can all see now the benefits of this, with the quality of the course for this time of year coming out of a bad winter.
- Since tree removal work was completed on the 7th green area the green itself has improved going through winter. This is as a result of more daylight

and increased air flow. We hope that next autumn/winter will be even better and we can go into next autumn with the greens and course in a much healthier condition.

- Our 6th, 7th and 18th greens have had a few bore holes installed to help them drain. We bored to 800 - 1000mm deep and already we have seen improvements. This is another measure to help us manage these greens over a longer period and within an agreed budget.
- Tree work is now complete for this winter. 10 of the 18 holes have had tree lower branches cut/lifted by our greens staff and a programme of tree felling has been undertaken by Whittakers as part of our joint forestry management. More light, more healthy growth.
- All tees which were turf cut have now been finished with new turf laid. There are a few other areas which will be completed on the next turf order.



- New hedging on the practice field has now been completed. This was all cost free as we qualified for a grant. All hedging is hawthorn with a mixture of Whitebeam and Rowan trees.

- We trust that flooding on the 14th fairway should be much less of a problem for some time as the farmer has ploughed his field.

He is considering creating a bund to the left of the 14th green to help alleviate flooding, as this is a condition of our agreement that the land we lease in this area remains fit for play. Although this is likely to be a constant

problem he has, especially given the extreme weather we can expect from climate change in the future.

Ash Holt Floods



- **All bunkers have been edged off and those needing work to create easier entrancing and exiting have been completed; sand levels will be the next task for us to work at before the season starts.**
- **Sorrel rollers have been a great purchase as more aeration has been encouraged.**
- **All Greens staff attended a first aid course on the 21st of February, held in the club house along with a number of House and Office Staff.**
- **Our new fairway mower has started its move from the USA and we hope to see it in action by April, just as the grass starts growing vigorously.**
- **We will be purchasing a new tractor in April, as our old Kubota tractor has a major part broken at the rear. (Sounds like a Seniors complaint!) To repair this would be more than the tractor itself is worth. We are currently unable to lift any ancillary pieces of machinery with this and to try and do so could be a health and safety hazard.**
- **We are working through a programme of machinery servicing. Not surprisingly the cost of parts has increased quite a lot, and our machines have usage rates well above average, so the service bills are eye watering.**
- **‘Premier Pitches’ returned in February to shockwave our greens again, which we have identified as a necessary part of course maintenance, to keep us on main greens during some of the adverse weather we experience.**

- During February we worked with the JCB on our 5th hole green side bunkers, which now look very good. We also created a new practice green on the practice field, with one bunker and one grass hollow. We have also worked on paths, filling pot holes and adding white lines. The buggy compound has been cleared, and finished with a surface of motorway planings.



- The high quality of the course condition at present is very much due to maintenance work carried out over the past 12 months. The drainage and irrigation work, as well as the shockwaving and use of the sorrel roller, have all contributed to the quality of the course and where we are now with it. It should now take us into the new season in a much better prepared condition compared to our starting point this time last year. This all comes at a cost and the Greens staff and committee thank the club for ongoing support in providing a budget that is adequate, and is a big plus in developing and maintaining the quality of the course and playing experience for members and visitors.

Good Golfing Manners

As we move towards a new season, it is a good time for some reminders of what good etiquette looks like on the course.

Quiet on the Tee

Our first tee is quite close to the clubhouse and the gathering area outside the shop, so remember that loud voices can carry easily and disturb those teeing off. Those with really loud voices probably need to keep this in mind almost everywhere on the course.

USGA says “Players should always show consideration for other players on the course and should not disturb their play by moving, talking or making any unnecessary noise.”

Pace of Play

Slow play is probably the most common complaint and no-one like to be waiting around for the group in front to get out of the way. Don't try and encourage them with a dangerous shot when they are still in range. If your match has a clear hole in front and you are delaying those behind, consider asking them if they want to play through.

Try and play quickly. Get to your ball and prepare your shot whilst others are playing, as long as you are not so far ahead as to be in their line of a wayward shot.

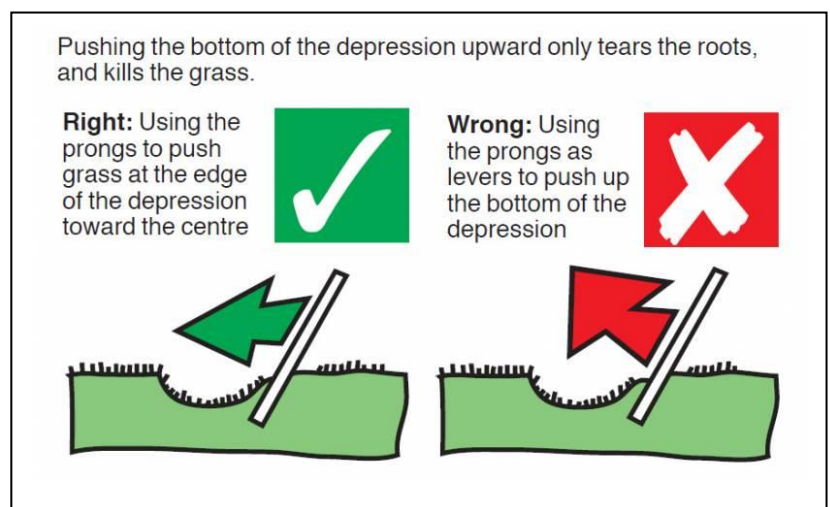
Be aware that smaller groups play faster and if you are 4 then a 3 behind might be waiting a lot, if you don't let them through. If you want to play as a 5 ball then this is only permitted if the course is quiet and you have cleared it with the Shop staff. If a 5 ball delays any other group they should split into 2 groups or let the others through immediately. 5 ball play is not usually permitted in competitions.

<https://www.golfspan.com/can-you-play-golf-with-5-players>

Be a good greenskeeper

Our greens staff work hard to try and make sure we have a course to be proud of. We can all do our bit.

- Repair pitchmarks and other damage..
- Rake bunkers and remove stones.



- Replace divots and carry use divot bags to fill old divots.
- Use divot fill from boxes on tees
- Keep trollies and buggies away from greens and tees.
- Obey lines and ropes that limit access to damaged areas.
- Buggies keep to paths and semi rough, crossing fairways at 90 degrees



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYVZgmeFWno>

Opinion on bunker rakes is divided as to whether they should be left in or out of bunkers. England Golf used to recommend they be left in a position least likely to interfere with play, which seems good, but greenkeepers tend to want them inside the bunker. Discuss.

Play Safe Golf

Be aware of the course safety rules and obey them at all times. They are posted in the clubhouse and a summary is printed on the cards.

England Golf

“Etiquette is a mixture of common sense, courtesy and means showing consideration to other golfers and the course.”

In accordance with the terms of our affiliation to England Golf we have recently reviewed and reissued our Equal Opportunities Policy and Disciplinary Code. These are published on the Visitors Information page of the website

Welcome to our New General Manager



Simon Collingwood will be joining the Club in the post of General Manager, from 1 April 2024.

This is a newly created post intended to professionalise the management and daily running of the Club with specific improvements expected, leading to increased efficiency and more effective marketing.

In Simon we believe we have secured someone with all the knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to make a success of the role. A former PGA professional, he was a winner of the Lagonda Trophy, alongside alumni such as Gary Wolstenholme, Luke Donald and Lee Westwood. Now returned to Amateur status, he still plays off 3.

He has been in golf management for over 20 years, most recently as General Manager at The Leicestershire Golf Club since 2020, and before that for 10 years at Newark Golf Club. At Leicestershire he delivered big improvements in course and marketing which led to substantial progress in developing visitor revenues whilst maintaining values through financial efficiency and operational effectiveness.

He impressed our interview team particularly with his detailed and comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of Golf Club management and clear enthusiasm for taking up and shaping a role which had not previously existed.

At Newark he also worked with Joanne, our new office administrator, so we have managed to reunite a winning team, by coincidence. The Members who attended the open meeting on 15 February had an opportunity to meet Simon, who clearly impressed many. We are sure he will soon become familiar to you all.

Doris

This is the picture used to go into the 100th birthday card for Doris; we thought she would love remembering our smiling faces!



Women in Golf.

In April 2023 we launched an initiative to attract more women into golf. Quite a number of ladies tried the first sessions and we now have eight stalwarts who attend monthly coaching with James. These sessions have been fun and relaxed and are showing evident steady progress. Two of the group have joined our club and another is joining in April.



Are you a woman who enjoys the outdoors, having fun and making new friends? Then why not...

SWING INTO SPRING 2024 at RETFORD GOLF CLUB

Join in our **FREE** women's taster session on **Saturday 20th April at 4pm**

Experience tuition from our **Class AA accredited P.G.A. professional - James Freeman**

Followed by a glass of Prosecco or hot drink in our clubhouse

Do you know the benefits of playing golf?

- Good for both physical and mental health
- Provides positive, social interaction
- Beautiful outdoor surroundings
- Golf is **FUN** and any one can play!

Join us at Retford Golf Club, Brecks Road, Retford, DN22 7UA
www.retfordgolfclub.co.uk

For info on how to join in, please email
jworksop3@gmail.com
or contact the club direct



Their skills have been developing as they make use of the course and are becoming keen golfers!

We are repeating the initiative this year with three **FREE** monthly taster sessions with James, starting **on Saturday 20th April 4pm**. This will be followed by Prosecco or fruit juice and snacks in the clubhouse. If any member knows of a friend or relative that would like to try these free sessions then please contact us via the email address on the poster or the office. We will then be in touch with further details.

Other dates for your diaries:-

Ladies' Spring Am-Am is Wednesday, the 24th April.

Senior Ladies will enjoy an Away Day to Styrrup Golf Club on Thursday 18th April

On Wednesday, the 3rd July, ladies have their Exchange Day with Market Rasen. There will be a change to the normal weekly arrangements at Retford, so on Tuesday 2nd July it will be free for members to book.

Many thanks, from

Jacky, Barbara, Bryony and Lin.

Members Meeting 15/2/24

A good room full of members attended the open members meeting on 15 February and receive a presentation from Mike Mahony, Treasurer, of the background to the 2024 Subscription rates.

In a time of rapidly changing inflation rates, financial forecasting has been difficult and it is clear from comparisons with other similar clubs nearby that they have also experienced considerable challenges. The increases in headline subscription rates for all 7 of these clubs all exceeded those which Retford implemented last year, with all but 2 double or more. This suggests that Retford's 7% was more optimistic about a headline rate of inflation that eventually ran at 10% with costs of some major items, such a fertiliser, exceeding this by a long way.

Nevertheless. we continued to invest in the course and clubhouse, with improved bunkers, drainage to the 1st Green, irrigation, extended buggy compound, air conditioning in the bar, a new fleet of buggies to hire, greens equipment, washdown facilities etc.



Most recently a new practice shelter and mats have been put on the practice field with financial help from Nottinghamshire Golf Union and the Seniors and Juniors sections.



A new borehole planned for this year will reduce the size of our water bills and a long awaited and ordered new fairway mower is expected for delivery soon.

The result of this has been some depletion of our financial reserves and a need to restore some of the ground lost from a previously robust financial position.

Further comparison with the local 7 clubs shows that, even after the proposed 10% increase in our subscriptions we will still be charging our members less than all of them, and, given the general condition of our course and our record of managing to remain open much more than others in periods of bad weather, it suggests good value.

There is no complacency and members noted that our green fee rates are also pitched much lower than the others. Action has been taken to implement an immediate 15% increase in green fee charges which will be reviewed again when the impact of this increase on turnover has been assessed. On line booking for casual green fee payers is being introduced, aiming to put more visitors into the quiet times, and more active marketing and a branding upgrade are under consideration.

Finally, Members were assured that the Driving Range proposal would not be pursued in a way that would draw unreasonably on Club finances, nor incur significant financial risks to the Club.

Members present generally indicated that they believed the proposed rise in subscriptions was appropriate.

House and Social Committee

Course Closure:

In the event of the course being closed on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, the Bar and Kitchen will also be closed.

In the event of the course being closed on a Friday, Saturday or a Sunday, the Bar and Kitchen will be open from 08.00hrs.

Forthcoming Events:

May Buffet and Music Bash 18th May 2024; more details closer to the time.

Wine Tasting Evening with sommelier Patrice Lipatti-Mesme 14th September 2024; more details closer to the time.

Race Night 9th November 2024; more details closer to the time.

Captains Christmas Party 12th December 2024; more details closer to the time.

Captains' Events

Captains' Fun Mixed Competition open to the Mens and Ladies Sections



There will be two events, this year.

Wednesday 22nd May 2024 and Wednesday 25th Sept. 2024.

£10.00 pp to include:

- Sandwiches and chips
- Prizes 1st to 3rd

Format: 4 Ball Stableford, one Lady and one Gent to score on each hole.

Teams will be drawn from a hat. One high and one low handicapper on each side

1st Tee time 11.00hrs

Captains' Charities 2023

Captains Anna Avery and Dave Halford were tremendously proud and grateful to announce the total charities collection as £8000 for 2023, and pass on the thanks of their chosen charities to all members and other contributors.



Seniors Section

Diary Dates:

The Seniors Section AGM will be held in the Club House on Thursday 28th March 2024 at 16.30pm.

All paid up Senior members (over the age of 55) are entitled to attend but voting rights will be in accordance with the Byelaws of the Club, i.e. Full, Life, Honorary, Intermediate and Five-Day Members have 1 vote, all other categories no voting rights.

Seniors Friendly Matches Fixtures 2024

Club	Team	Home Match 2024	Away Match 2024
Rufford	12	Thurs 28 March	
Mapperley	12	Thurs 25 April	
Thonock	16		Tues 30 April
Ramsdale	12	Thurs 23 May	
Town Moor	12		Wed 29 May
Wath	12		Mon 03 June
Doncaster	16		Thurs 13 June
Styrrup	12	Thurs 27 June	
Ramsdale	12		Thurs 04 July
The Nottinghamshire	TBC		Thurs 11 July
Mapperley	12		Mon 15 July
Wath	12	Thurs 25 July	
Doncaster	16	Thurs 01 Aug	
Styrrup	12		Thurs 8 Aug
Worksop	16		Mon 12 Aug
The Nottinghamshire	TBC	Thurs 22 Aug	
Worksop	16	Thurs 29 Aug	
Thonock	16	Thurs 5 Sept	
Town Moor	12	Thurs 26 Sept	
Rufford	12		Thurs 10 Oct

Management Committee 2024

Directors			
 Mike Mahony <i>Treasurer</i>	 Fraser Britton <i>Chairman</i>	 Stuart Moore <i>President</i>	 Mary Saddington <i>Co-opted</i>
Members			
 Steve Hyatt	 Charles Cooke	 Paul Burgin	
 Ray Wood	 Paul Bradley	 Jason Crook	
Captains			
 John Flavell	Ros Waterhouse		
Vice Captains		Past Captains	
 Mark Allan	 Lynda Moore	 David Halford	 Anna Avery
Ladies Secretary		Professional	
Karen Hutchinson			Craig Morris

and finally...

What a lot of balls!

A recent scuba dive in our very own duck pond produced 3500 balls. No, you can't claim them back, but they can be purchased at a very reasonable rate from the Pro's shop.

Let Us Know

We keep reviewing the ways members can communicate with the Committee about what's happening in the Club.



- The *Suggestions Box* has been relocated to the reception area, below the computer terminal used for entering competition scores. Members can put any ideas or suggestions to the Management Committee but please make sure each has your name clearly marked on it or no action can be taken.
- There is also a printed leaflet available in the foyer and bar area of the Clubhouse, giving details and photos of the Management Committee members.
- The Club Room TV no longer has a scrolling information display as the computer equipment became faulty.
- If Club members want to raise any points/issues/queries for the Committees, please contact the chair of the appropriate sub-committee, via the e-mail address retfordgolfcomms@gmail.com, or through the Suggestions Box. If members have any golf related news items please let Andy Massey know, via retfordgolfcomms@gmail.com.

- The Club has a Facebook Page, “Retford Golf Club”, for regular general updates and information for the General Public. A group “Retford Golf Club Members” has also been created where information aimed just for members is regularly posted. Members are also encouraged to follow our playing professional “James Freeman Professional Golfer” on Facebook and Instagram
- The next full Management meeting will be on **Wednesday 13 March at 6.00pm.** * If members have any points they would like to raise for future meetings, please write to the Chairman, via the Office.

Best wishes, from □

Andy Massey, Charles Cooke, John Flavell, Keran Hutchinson

Communication Group (on behalf of the Management Committee)