

Golf Committee - Minutes of Virtual Meeting

Date : Wednesday 17th March, 2021

PURPOSE :

Following the distribution of a discussion document regarding the Men's Open, several members of the Golf Committee have raised doubts regarding the running of Opens across all sections of Nene Park Golf Club.

The following minutes contain details of all discussions and the conclusion of the Golf Committee on this matter.

MEMBERS INVOLVED :

Emailed responses came from Gary Geddis (GG), Bob Morris (RM), Iain Caville (IC), Karen Ivens (KI), Christine Dixon (CD), Dave Riley (DR), Nigel Richards (NR), Steve Parker (SP), Pam Cox (PC)

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT :

The original email for discussion sent to GG, DR & NR from Iain Caville (Men's Competition Secretary) with specific regard to the Men's Open was as follows ;

I have purposely done nothing with the Men's Open (scheduled for 25th July) as there has been so much uncertainty. However, we now need to discuss where we go with this in 2021. If we go ahead with this, we are going to have some major practical issues to consider and overcome.

First of all, I don't think it is going to be easy or practical to guarantee any catering facilities. In fact, I have concerns that we might even struggle to get a drink afterwards. Even though everything should be back to "normal" from the end of June, it is being reported that pubs etc are booking up for weeks. As the pub isn't going to be open until the end of May, there is no chance to plan in advance. Not having a clubhouse puts us at a distinct disadvantage, as we can't "reserve" the bar and eating areas all day.

We also have to consider the possibility that things may not be back to normal, so we have to factor that into any arrangements. The last thing we need is having to refund everyone or similar, and we certainly don't want to have to contend with restrictions on changing rooms, etc.

Another potential spanner in the works is that I believe CAGU have set the same date as the final of the Derek Burrige, and we have 2 teams who have a knack of getting to the final.

I also have reservations regarding handicaps of Away players, as I think there are going to be many "artificial" handicaps due to the lockdowns. In the past, players had to have "competition" handicaps - now this doesn't exist. One option may be to impose an eligibility e.g. that a player must have submitted at least 3 cards since 1st August 2020. However, that will be a nightmare to impose & police.

We should also consider what is the purpose of an Open. It isn't for the financial income, as all entry fees go into prizes, and in any case we don't need the income. In the past it was to attract non-members and to show people what a great Golf Club we have. Right now we don't need more members, and if we can't put on a good show the day could turn out to be an embarrassment.

So, as I see it, I think we have 2 options ;

1. We go ahead with the Men's Open but we make it clear that the event is turn up, play and go home, with prizes as vouchers that will be posted on after the event

2. We consider postponing the Open until 2022 when we can organise a top class event and do things properly, and instead hold an alternative members-only event in 2021 e.g. a Captain's Charity Day

Also, looking on Golf Empire etc., it looks like there are very few golf clubs holding Opens this year. Maybe that is telling us something ?

I'm happy to get the ball rolling either way, but I am reluctant to end up with a half-baked Men's Open that could potentially create a negative impression of the Club.

Let me know your thoughts, concerns, ideas, or anything else that should be discussed around this.

Correction : The CAGU competition on the same day is the final of the Cambridge Evening News, in which NPGC have 3 pairs competing.

RESPONSES :

The original email resulted in responses as follows ;

GG : "Postpone Open would be best. Rather than not do properly as people love playing in our Open"

DR : "I'm for a postponement until the year after and hold a charity event as you mentioned"

NR : "Regretfully, I'm of the same opinion as Gary & Dave, and would support postponement to 2022.

A pity, as it's normally a great day. Personally I think the Woodman would support the club if we could guarantee 150 people eating/drinking, but I think there may still be some reluctance to mingle closely for a while yet."

FURTHER RESPONSES :

Due to the clear agreement from everyone, the opinion of the Seniors and Ladies Competition organisers was also requested. Their responses are ;

CD : "As discussed agree wholeheartedly with Men's opinions - I've talked to Karen about our OM one & am going to broach something similar to ladies on our next committee meeting"

KI : "Yes, agree with all of Iain's well made points about cancelling Opens this year ... seem to remember a similar conversation this time last year about cancelling 2020 opens, then all would be "back to normal" for 2021 Opens! Well ... I really hope it will be by 2022"

RM : "I agree. I have cancelled the Senior Open on 7th July, but I am going to hang on to the tees for now"

SP : "I have nothing to add and totally support the recommendations"

PC : "Definitely think we should postpone till 2022 as have decided this at the ladies committee meeting and we decided the ladies would be better off postponed for this year"

CONCLUSIONS :

The overall and unanimous conclusion is that it would be in the better interests of the Golf Club to postpone the holding of Open events until 2022, when it is hoped that we will be able to organise events of the quality and scale for which Nene Park Golf Club has become known.

It is also recommended that the Golf Club should utilise the dates originally scheduled to organise suitable member only events. It has been suggested that the Club could hold fund-raising events for charity on one or some of these dates. This will be discussed in due course.