

Work in the Office Continues

Following the departure of Alex MacDonald at the end of November the office has continued to function!! Subscription notices were sent out and cheques from members paying their 2008 fees have been banked.

As members will appreciate this is a busy time for the office but Kim, with Robert Daley's help, is continuing to ensure that it operates as well as possible. In addition to the subscriptions and all the changes in membership that always take place at this time of year the office has been busy with bookings for the New Year Dinner, Burn's Supper, Captain's Charity Quiz night and the forthcoming St David' Day Concert.

Members are asked to show a little patience if it takes a little longer to get answers from the office at this time.

Advertisements for a replacement Secretary/General manager have been placed in both the December and January editions of the Journal of the Golf Club Managers' Association and to date over 25 applications have been received.

What's happening on the 5th Green?

A full explanation on the planned work was included in the last Newsletter. Despite the tree removal work and aeration this green was still in the poorest condition of all our greens with deficient growth and a high water table.

The decision was taken to strip the turf and install drainage to improve its condition and at the same time reshape the green to increase pin positions. When the turf was removed its condition and that of the soil beneath was found to be in a much worse state than was anticipated. The root growth was very shallow and the root zone was none existent due to a black layer of compacted clay based soil. Consequently new turf will be laid over a new root zone layer with a bent fescue mix which will be hardier, have improved playability and allow the green to drain better.

Understandably this is likely to display slightly different playing characteristics to the other greens at Mid-Herts but the 5th green has been different for some time due to its poor condition. This work will also help to keep the green in play more often, especially in wet conditions. It is hoped that the green will be back in play in April dependant of course on weather conditions.

2008 Tree Programme

Approval has been received from St Albans Council for this winter's proposed tree programme. Budgetary restraints will, however, restrict us to undertaking about 50% of the planned work this year.

Our contractors "All Cut & Cleared", who did such a commendable job last year, will start during February. Members are requested to be understanding if they find that while they are working on parts of the course, the hole is closed, or temporary tees and greens are in use, to ensure players and contractors safety. The work will include the removal of two ash and all the Lawson cypress trees bordering us and the rear of Plough Cottage. This follows an approach to the club from the owners and their insurance company regarding subsidence, it is planned to replace the trees with a wooden fence.

Full details of the work on the course will be displayed on the notice board.

Success for Mid-Herts Ladies

Two of our ladies have enjoyed golfing success in recent months and deserve our congratulations:

Hannah Burke has won the individual championship at Baylor University in Texas. She has been given a magnificent trophy which she has very kindly donated to the Ladies Section to be offered as a prize in memory of Ruth Rees. The Ladies Committee is at present deciding on the most appropriate occasion at which it can be awarded on an annual basis.

Mary Hoare, the winner of the Temple trophy, has reached the last eight of a national championship for the winners of their club's net competition from last summer. The final stages of this competition will be played at The Belfry on April 6th.

Thank you, Hannah and good luck, Mary!

Are You Playing to the New Rules?

Every 4 years the R & A re-issue the Rules of Golf and invariably there are changes.

The latest edition, "**Rules of Golf 2008-2011**" is now out and in operation.

You may have already seen the full list displayed on the notice board, or even have picked up and read the new rule book, which is freely available in the clubhouse. If you haven't in short here are five of the more important ones that you are likely to encounter.

Playing a wrong ball in a hazard: There used to be no penalty for playing wrong ball from a hazard (bunker or water), this has now changed. It is now a two-stroke penalty in stroke play or loss of hole in match play if you do! Consequently the rules have also been changed to allow a player to lift his ball for identification in a hazard, but you must carry out the correct procedure as detailed in Rule 12-1, otherwise you will incur a one-stroke penalty.

Ball deflected by player or his side: The penalty for a ball in motion being deflected or stopped by the player, partner, caddie or equipment is amended to reduce the penalty in both match play and stroke play to one-stroke. Previously this was loss of hole in match play and two-stroke penalty in stroke play.

Allowed to move flagstick with ball in motion: Anyone is now allowed to move a flag stick whether attended, removed or held up, when a ball is in motion, if you believe a ball may strike it.

Standing astride line of putt: To speed play and avoid the necessity for marking and lifting on the putting green, players may now stand astride or on the line of putt, provided the act is inadvertent or is to avoid standing on another player's line of putt.

"Reasonable evidence" tightened up: Finally the term "reasonable evidence" has been replaced by "known or virtually certain" when determining whether a ball that has not been found may be treated as being in an obstruction (Rule 24-3), an abnormal ground condition (Rule 25-1) or a water hazard (Rule 26-1).

There are a number of minor clarifications but these are the principal changes likely to affect the club player.

11th TEE / 13th GREEN PRIORITY

Following an incident when a ball struck from the tee hit a lady on the green a new sign is to be placed on the 11th Tee to clarify the priority of play for players arriving on this Tee:

Players MUST NOT drive if players are putting out on the 13th Green, unless invited to do so.

Players arriving at the 13th green should, before commencing putting, allow players on the 11th tee to drive-off.

This is the same priority that applies to the 1st tee and 6th green.

Safety on the course is of paramount importance to us all and your help in ensuring this is appreciated.

Nominations Required;

With the AGM looming on 20th April, nominations are required to fill the vacancies that will be occurring on both the **Board of Management** and the **Captain's Committee**.

To clarify the role of the two committees, **The Board of Management** has overall responsibility for the management and control of the course, property, funds, finances, Membership and administration of the Club, whilst **The Captain's Committee** has responsibility for all golfing and social matters.

What are the qualifications required of someone considering going onto one of the Committees?-

A real interest in the ongoing welfare of Mid-Herts Golf Club, a reasonable level of common sense, and of course the ability to commit some time and effort to the role.

So if you know someone who you think could benefit the club by working on one of the Committees, make an effort to persuade them to stand. A proposer and a seconder are required for anyone standing, and in the case of the Board of Management a brief resume of background history. More details and nomination forms are available from the Secretary's office.

Marketing the Club

Under the Chairmanship of **Steve Foster**, a new group has been formed to explore all avenues for marketing the club to the outside world, to attract new members and optimise society use. If you have any novel suggestions please contact Steve, or any of the other group members, **Peter McIntyre, Nigel Shadbolt, Chris Tingle and Phil Craghill**.