

# THE GOLF CLUB SECRETARY

Briefing and practical advice for golf club administrators

## GCS coronavirus survey - April 2020

In mid-April, we surveyed a good number of subscriber clubs across the spectrum, from modest nine-holers run on a relative shoestring, to well-known multi-course establishments where money, on the face of it, would appear not to be an issue.

It has been particularly pleasing that, at a time when we are all going through something we have never before experienced and are having to think on our feet to keep things ticking over, so many of you not only responded, but also responded quickly and in depth.



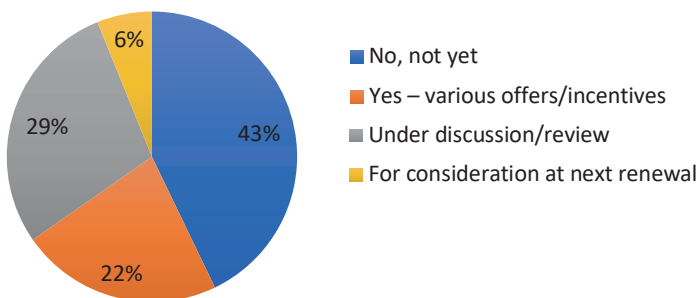
Jez Ellwood

The range of responses to our five questions has been broad, and we hope that you will find reassurance in this, because whatever your club is facing, and whatever courses of action you, your management boards or committees have elected to take, you are almost certainly not alone - another club somewhere will be facing the same dilemmas and taking similar steps. It is clear that while there is reasonable consensus on certain elements of the crisis, there is no such thing as a standard response.

Outside of our survey, it has been pleasing to see a number of clubs really take the bull by the horns in the quest to raise funds, with Peebles, Torwoodlee, Elgin and Croham Hurst among the first to launch fund-raising campaigns via Just Giving to help with emergency cashflow.

Here, we present a summary of your feedback featuring selected anonymous quotes from what you have told us about how you and your clubs are reacting to the crisis...

**Q1. Has your club offered any incentives regarding membership as a result of the wet winter and/or coronavirus crisis, and if so, what have you done?**



### What you told us

*Not at all. As a not-for-profit business we would be kicking the can down the road. If we did this, subscriptions would need to be increased further.*

## Quote OF THE MONTH

*"The ardent golfer would play Mount Everest if somebody put a flagstick on top"*

PETE DYE

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Jeff Bateman

Our Membership renewal date was 1st April and at that date we had received less than 40% of our subscription fees. I led the charge to put some assistance measures in place, which I've detailed below. As of now I have 75% of our subscription fees...

- Moved our next membership renewal date back to 1st July 2021, with the open-ended option for the management committee to move this date back or forward dependent on when coronavirus movement restrictions are lifted.
- Monthly payments at no extra cost and can be spread over any period up to 15 months. Monthly payments must begin in April to take advantage of the fee-free offer.
- No pro-rata of membership fees for anyone wishing to rejoin the club between 1st July 2020 and 28th February 2021. The full-year subscription will be payable.

Not at the moment. We are lucky as our subscription year runs from January to December so we will have to consider that later on. However, we are considering a levy to help fill the black hole but also have other plans to consider.

Renewal date is 30th April - hard to imagine one worse! The decision was made to ask members to pay 50% of whatever their renewal figure would be, and to make no charge for social members at this point with the clubhouse closed.

No, we are waiting to see what the final financial implications are for the club before deciding what course of action to take. We have advised members, who are mostly happy with this action.

None as yet although the board is looking at various options including using the £25k grant we received to perhaps distribute as a retro or discount on next year's fees for members who support us. We are keen to treat members on a case-by-case basis as some clearly want to support the club, but financially can't right now.

Our membership renewal date is 1st May so, in order to encourage as many as possible to rejoin at this difficult time, we have: reduced all subscriptions by 25% for the next year; made the £50 charge to bar cards optional.

No, we firmly believe that the members as shareholders are the custodians of the club and business and to that end will support the recovery.

April each year is our membership renewal date, so this is a difficult time for us. We have asked people to pay even though there is no golf available. We are likely to look at some kind of extension to next year's subscriptions, but if this carries on for a few more months this will cause us problems next year.

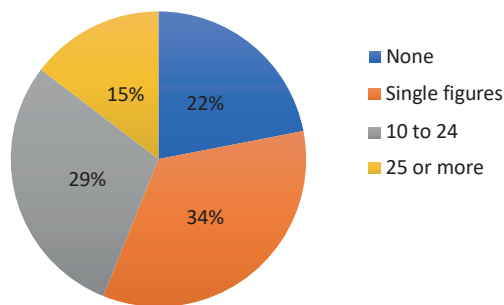
#### GCS comment

There are a wide range of responses, with nothing really off the table. Renewal date and the financial health of the club are perhaps the key issues. Those with renewal dates between March and June face the biggest challenge and are having to think on their feet the most.

A number of clubs have successfully been able to promise that any remedial action or compensation will be addressed down the line or in the next subscription year. This could help maintain cashflow now when most needed, leaving other important decisions re recompense to be left until things are more settled.

Many clubs have reported some success in simply being honest with members - the money has to come from somewhere if they want a club to return to. Generally, there have been favourable member responses to such an approach.

## Q2. How many requests have you had from members re possible rebates or extensions on memberships?



#### What you told us

As of yet, none!

50+ enquiries about what the club would do to mitigate the loss of golf. Decisions made were largely driven by the lack of income from subscriptions at the point of renewal.

We haven't had any requests to date. However, that may change when restrictions are relaxed and we are able to reopen.

One or two but I would expect more the longer we are locked down. We had a 1st March renewal, so most subs were in pre-lockdown. One person asked, "How can you charge me for a product that you can no longer offer?" but many have offered to help pay for any shortfall at the end of the year.

So far we have had only two members asking about what we will be doing due to a lack of golf. More members, luckily, have offered, in various cashflow ways, to help us through this period from buying members' guest tickets in advance to a simple cash injection.

Our renewals take place on 1st October. 140 members pay by DD - two of them to date have suspended their payments and the board will determine how to manage that scenario.

We have communicated regularly, keeping the members informed on all that is happening as well as asking them to support the club as there may not be a club to come back to if they didn't. So far we have had about 40 members say that they don't want the credit offered for next year, which is a nice touch.

20 - the majority applying for a payment holiday, but around five seeking something more, with one threat of legal action as being requested to pay for something they cannot currently use!

We have had dozens of members who have asked what we are going to do for them. The simple answer has been that when we come out of the coronavirus, they will have a great golf course to play.

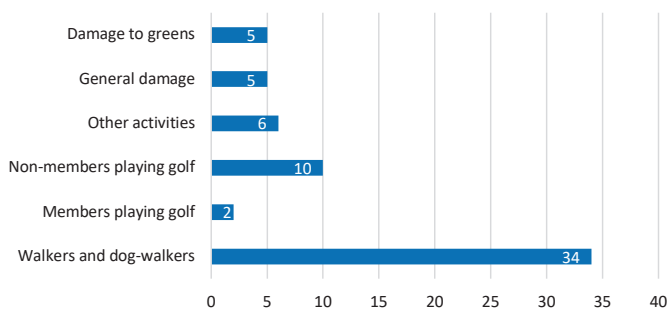
#### GCS comment

The good news for clubs at this difficult time is that a healthy number (56%) are reporting either no such queries or merely a handful so far.

Communication appears to be key, with several clubs reporting that when the severity of the situation and potential implications for the club have been explained to those enquiring, most are satisfied with the response.

However, some members are on the lookout for recompense, with one or two even bringing up the perceived legalities of being asked to pay for a service that clubs are currently unable to provide. Encouragingly, there were a greater number of reports of members willing to help cover lost income, along with others happy to waive any discounts or rebates offered.

### Q3. Have people been using the course since lockdown in any way (e.g. golf, walking, dog-walking etc.) and if so, have they been using it with respect or causing any damage or problems?



#### What you told us

*We've caught a couple of members playing and a strong email has been sent out to the membership. We have also experienced large gatherings of youths on the course due to the public footpath which crosses several holes. The police have dealt with these swiftly.*

*We have quite a few members and non-members alike who are walking themselves and their dogs. They have been very good in not abusing the situation and are tidying up after their dogs and no damage has been done.*

*This is always something of an issue in that we have footpaths adjacent and crossing the course. However, aside from a family game of tennis on the 5th green in the first week of lockdown, nothing major.*

*Sadly, the kids playing on bikes and skateboards have caused damage to one of our greens. We are also seeing an increase in animal damage due to there being so few humans around to hide from.*

*Lots of walkers but so far no damage. As long as this remains the case I see no real problem with local resident walkers. They may like what they see and join.*

*Many local residents have been walking/jogging. The bunkers are a mess but easily restored (mainly animals) but no significant damage. Two golfers - non-members - were told to leave politely and did so.*

*We have had some local teenagers riding their bikes on the course (including across greens) so we have had some minor damage.*

*Four idiots playing - non-members. They were sent away by me with more than a flea in their ear!*

*There have been various requests from local residents to open the course [for exercise] and they have escalated this to MPs, councillors etc. Although we could manage this, our insurance company has stated we lose our liability insurance if we open up as a public park.*

*An utter nightmare! Dog-walkers, picnickers, BBQs, football games. Thankfully, only minor damage thus far, but pretty disgraceful behaviour from a minority of neighbours. Dog foul and littering all over the place etc.*

#### GCS comment

Many courses have footpaths and/or roads crossing them, so already attract plenty of walkers and dog-walkers. With no golfers playing, they have perhaps strayed a little further out onto the course, but mainly without causing damage.

Relatively few people are trying to play golf, and thankfully hardly any members, though some will no doubt be members elsewhere seeking to avoid direct sanctions.

Damage to greens has been fairly minimal, but is still hugely disappointing given how much time, effort and money goes into their preparation. Some of this is deliberate vandalism, especially where divots have been found, meaning that it is golfers causing the damage; some of it (picnics, tennis etc) is more lack of awareness among the general public as to just how important these particular surfaces are to a golf club.

### Q4. Have you instructed greens staff how best to approach or deal with people during lockdown both out on the course and via social media?

#### What you told us

*We have only two greens staff working and they've been instructed to avoid people on the course and call the police if they see damage or vandalism being caused.*

*Our course manager is the only course staff working and as a formidable Scot he will tell infiltrators in no uncertain terms what is right and what is not!*

*Yes, thoughtfully and at a safe distance. We have also circulated instructions via our club emails but not on social media.*

*Greens staff have been told to politely ask anyone who is doing something they shouldn't - particularly sneaking on to play - that they should pack in and leave. However, they have also been told to not get into any argument-type situations.*

*No instruction given, only a pleasant common-sense approach.*

*They are used to it, so we have a clear policy for such behaviour.*

*Our staff are used to approaching walkers so have long since been trained in how to do so politely and direct them away from any danger.*

*They politely remind walkers it is private property but are never confrontational.*

*Face to face with courtesy but firmness - wouldn't use social media platforms to deliver a message like that.*

*Yes, we are adopting a 'soft' approach whilst out on the course - we are not currently using social media channels for this subject.*

#### GCS comment

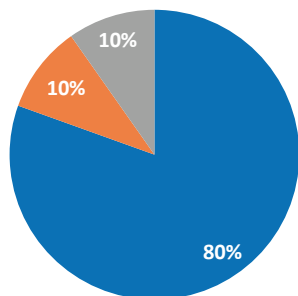
Different clubs are adopting slightly different approaches, but most are wisely going down a minimal or zero confrontation route and using politeness, sometimes tinged with firmness, to encourage people to stay on paths and not venture on to parts of the course where they shouldn't be.

Several clubs have reported that they are used to dealing with such issues because of footpaths and roads on the courses, so greens staff are well-versed in how best to deal with people. Some clubs already have policies written in to employment handbooks.

Most are wisely choosing to forbid or limit the use of social media to get such messages across. We think this is very wise so as not to potentially publicise issues or incidents far and wide, which could provoke reaction and further action from those with anti-golf sentiments.

## Q5. Are you still fully in your role and how many of your staff have been furloughed?

- Still fully in role
- Furloughed
- Under review/may be furloughed



### What you told us

Yes, and operating a members' shopping service using our suppliers, who are delighted. 22 of 28 staff furloughed.

At present I am fully in my role - working from home four days a week and in the office for one day a week to check post, run taps etc. All clubhouse staff, admin staff and two greens staff have been furloughed.

All 24 staff furloughed except the course manager. I am also furloughed but answering emails and sending members' queries on to our volunteer board of directors (\*see below)

I am furloughed along with 12 others out of a staff of 16.

More fully than ever - all house staff furloughed, two greens staff and my assistant. Last man standing other than the greens team who are shift-working limited hours. I've also been out cutting fairways!

At present, I am still in my role, but I would expect this to be reviewed, possibly next month. The only added string to my bow is that I can get on the machinery if needed so this gives ourselves the possibility of two greens staff.

The club furloughed me Monday. Two greenkeepers were furloughed 6th April, which just leaves the head greenkeeper working.

The greens staff will be on a 'three week on, three week off' furlough arrangement to keep all members of staff engaged.

The course manager and I, both of whom live on site, are the only two employees working.

Yes, but may volunteer myself for furlough if it goes beyond mid-May. All other house staff furloughed. All greens staff in for two more weeks and then we'll furlough three out of seven.

### GCS comment

It's a fairly arbitrary figure given how much clubs vary in size and staffing arrangements, but the average number of staff furloughed at respondents' clubs was 13.2, ranging from five up to 30.

Most clubs have chosen to fully retain their manager's services at the moment, though that was either under review or likely to change for 10% of respondents. For some clubs, there may be a balancing act between retaining the services of the most critical employee to guide the club through uncharted waters or maximising the financial assistance available from the government to reduce the impact on club finances.

It was encouraging to see one respondent say they were rotating furloughed greens staff on a 'three weeks on, three weeks off' basis to keep everyone engaged. While this may not be practical for all clubs, it is certainly worthy of consideration, and is allowed within the furlough scheme.

\* It is worth stressing that any furloughed managers should not be doing any work at all for the club while furloughed (including replying to emails) under the provisions of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme legislation.

The GCS will be looking to organise an event as soon as golf is given a sufficient green light to give you a chance to discuss the above in more depth with your colleagues. We are hoping this will be the first event of our 25th GCS - Open Championship on Wednesday 19th August at Hankley Common as planned, but will monitor the situation and adapt accordingly if need be. [GCS](#)

## Golf Genius - the perfect post-lockdown solution



Whether or not lockdown measures are eased to some degree in the latest review, there is hope in some quarters that golf may be allowed to resume in some form in the reasonably near future, albeit almost certainly subject to the new norms of social distancing and minimal touchpoints.

Golf Genius software allows you to administer **contactless** golf events, with users able to 'live score' on their personal device from the course - as many of you have experienced already with The GCS - Open - sending final scorecards for playing partner review and to the event admin when confirmed, and completely taking away the need for touching and countersigning scorecards.

Golf Genius can simply and effectively communicate with players pre-event and can be used to send out event info and links via email, as well as tips on how to stay safe with COVID-19 best practice. Results can then be emailed out to the field and displayed on the web portal for competitors to view from the safety of their home post-round.

Golf Genius is currently offering a free package to help manage the impact of COVID-19 on competitive golf. To find out more, contact **Nick Smith** by email on [nick.smith@golfgenius.com](mailto:nick.smith@golfgenius.com) [GCS](#)

# Coronavirus: an insurance insight from Bluefin Sport

*Scott Howe, business development manager at Bluefin Sport, addresses the various insurance issues that the coronavirus pandemic is raising for golf clubs.*

Firstly, everyone at Bluefin Sport extends their best wishes and continued good health to all readers of this newsletter and your families. Never before will many of us have experienced anything quite like what we are currently living through. At times, it can be worrying, but there will soon be light at the end of the tunnel.

A friend of mine recently said to me that the current coronavirus pandemic and resulting lockdown has made him question the need for his job. This prompted me to think about the industry I work in, insurance, and how much of a requirement there is for people like me. I feel that now, more than any time I can previously recall, it has highlighted the importance for individuals and businesses to have suitable insurance in place.

## Insurance cover?

We are aware that the insurance industry has come under heavy criticism lately, as most Business Interruption (BI) policies simply do not cover the outbreak of COVID-19. It is thought only around 5% of BI policies will have the necessary extensions to trigger a pay-out for a pandemic such as the coronavirus (Insurance Age, 2020). We understand the predicament many golf clubs currently find themselves in having no insurance cover, and this will bring with it a huge amount of stress when negotiating the future survival of their clubs.

Historically, BI policies were not written with the intention of responding to global pandemics. Business Interruption is provided as part of a client's property insurance, and in that regard the core BI cover is for interruptions to the business, following **insured damage** to the property. The important part here is "insured damage". The coronavirus pandemic, and the different government measures taken to mitigate its impact, do not involve insured damage to a property and thus no cover can be provided.

Furthermore, most insurance policies only cover "Notifiable Diseases", with the policies then listing each Notifiable Disease. No new disease can be added to the list without the prior written consent of the insurer, and as COVID-19 was a previously unknown disease, it has never been written into any insurance policy. Unsurprisingly, no insurer will now write coronavirus into their policies. We are instead seeing insurers provide explicit coronavirus exclusion clauses at renewal.

## Keeping your premises safe

Due to our current situation, all golf clubs are closed and therefore all premises are unoccupied. We would urge you to speak with your insurance broker to clarify their stance on the 'Unoccupied Premises' condition on your policy.

We also suggest that you seek agreement from your insurer that your premises will not be regarded as unoccupied. Bluefin Sport's insurer, for example, understands the current situation and we have updated our position on 'temporarily unoccupied buildings'. We consider 'temporarily unoccupied' to be where you have followed government advice to close your premises, and it will be out of use for up to 90 consecutive days. Furthermore, there is

no need to notify us that your premises have closed temporarily due to the COVID-19 outbreak. We would recommend seeking a similar confirmation from your own insurer.

There are also a number of actions you can undertake to keep your premises safe and secure. The following list is not exhaustive but covers the salient points.

1. Where practical and safe, you should endeavour to check your premises twice a week.
2. Ensure your emergency response plans are up to date, including your disaster recovery plans.
3. Ensure the security on your site remains effective.
4. Ensure key equipment and utilities remain operational.
5. Check that your physical security is adequate and in good condition.
6. Your perimeter fencing should have no gaps in it, and any defects must be fixed as soon as possible. Check your perimeter doors and windows and record these checks.
7. If possible, it is good practice to place large concrete bollards at your entry and exit points to stop people driving in and out in should there be a break-in.
8. Remove any combustible materials from your premises. We have seen a few claims for fires occurring at unoccupied premises, so this is a key point.
9. If possible, we recommend isolating any non-essential water and electrical supplies. Can any be cut off or drained? This removes the risk of Legionnaires disease. Keep a record of the systems you have drained and/or isolated, in case someone needs to access them in an emergency.
10. Now is a good time to review your existing documentation, Health and Safety policy etc., and update all items where necessary.
11. Make sure your alarm system is fully operational by carrying out regular system checks; it is imperative this system is in working order.
12. Please ensure that no 'hot work' is being undertaken at the premises. This is not so much to do with the fact that 'hot work' is a high-hazard risk, rather it is about the availability of the emergency services and their ability to attend your premises in a timely manner.

## Record-keeping

An important point we would like to make, is that you must keep records of all the checks and repairs you carry out during this time. This acts as proof that you have discharged your duty of care, having documented everything you have done, and adhered to the conditions of your policy. This will always be the first thing insurers ask for in the event of a claim - proof that you ensured your premises are safe and secure.

## Changes in use of your premises

We are also coming across more stories of golf clubs altering the way in which their clubhouse is being utilised. Many clubs are making their premises available to NHS staff, having volunteers deliver prescriptions or operating takeaway services for vulnerable individuals or local NHS staff. It is great to see this sort of kindness and community spirit at so many clubs.

As with the above point, I would recommend speaking with your broker and letting them know if you are carrying out such activities. Although this will most likely be acceptable, it is good practice to make them aware. Your insurer may issue an updated schedule to reflect the change in your business activities.

### Public using your golf course during lockdown

With the country instructed to leave the house once a day for exercise, we are hearing of golf courses being the venue of choice for many walkers and dog-walkers. This may leave you worried about the potential for incidents or damage, and questioning whether or not your club is covered should something happen.

If an individual decided to play golf on your course and caused damage to the course or your premises, insurers will look to recover their losses against the individual who caused the damage. That said, the likelihood of the individual being known is very slim.

What if an individual hit a stray golf ball and damaged a third party's property, or even caused bodily injury to a third party?

In this instance, we would expect any claim to be brought against the individual, not the golf club. Although golf clubs still have a duty of care to keep the public safe, the current lockdown would be factored into discussions surrounding negligence. There is even the possibility of criminal proceedings being brought against the individual for going against government instruction.

Should members of the public decide to make use of your facilities for their daily exercise, all we would advise you to do is to continue to ensure that your premises and course are safe.

### Further information

Even if you are not a Bluefin Sport client, please do not hesitate to contact **Scott Howe** of Bluefin Sport who will be happy to offer impartial advice on the current situation. Scott can be contacted on **07595 192135** or by email at [scott.howe@bluefinsport.co.uk](mailto:scott.howe@bluefinsport.co.uk).

### References

Insurance Age (2020). 'Covid-19 Weekly Update' e-mail bulletin. [GCS](#)

## A response to Scottish Golf's VMS plans

In our March newsletter, we asked Scottish Golf to tell us about its new Venue Management System (VMS) and how it will benefit member clubs. There has been much change at Scottish Golf since then, with **Karin Sharp** replacing **Andrew McKinlay** as CEO, but here we invite **Mike Zisman**, president and CEO of Golf Genius Software, which supplies tournament management software to thousands of clubs around the world, to give his assessment of Scottish Golf's plans.

Scottish Golf (SG) has made bold decisions with respect to an SG-supplied Venue Management/Tournament Management System (VMS), official handicaps for unaffiliated golfers and a tee time reservation system. There has been a fair amount of miscommunication and confusion over these announcements. SG has received feedback from member clubs and independent software vendors (ISVs), and it has responded to this feedback positively. For full disclosure, we are one such ISV that offers a Tournament Management System (TMS) in Scotland and 45 other countries.

With respect to the SG-supplied VMS, SG is following a path pioneered by the USGA, and it works well. Embedded in the handicapping fee for each golfer in the U.S. is the cost of supplying a **basic** TMS for member clubs that want to use it. "Everyone pays, some use" has been the practice for decades. I liken it to the U.S. school tax system. All citizens pay school taxes to their local community. Most parents send their children to public school, but the parents who choose to send their children to private school must pay public school taxes in addition to private school tuition. **We all support public education to ensure that families that do not choose private education can still access a quality education system.** The USGA-supplied system is funded by a "surcharge" on golfer handicaps at all clubs. This is exactly what SG is doing. What has made the USGA system work well for decades is two critically important principles:

- It's a basic system intended to meet the basic needs of a golf club, and does not purport to be the "best" system on the market. SG and member clubs are funding an ISV (OCS) to build a VMS, TMS and tee time system with a very small fraction of the

investment made over decades by specialised ISVs like us, Club Systems, Intelligent Golf, HandicapMaster, BRS, etc. To be "best", OCS must provide all of the features of each and every one of these products - a gargantuan task for a company that prided itself on building bespoke software. It is one thing to build an alluring user interface (what we call "eye candy") and this can be done quickly, but it is a very long road to build the very deep feature set provided by existing suppliers. It takes money and it takes time - nine women cannot have a baby in one month.

After the USGA rolled out its own product years ago, software companies such as Eventman, Tournament Expert, Vision Perfect and Handicomp all successfully competed with "free" Tournament Pairing Programs (TPP), because clubs realise that the true cost of software is the cost of using it - if a product that cost \$1,000 per year takes less time to manage and operate than a product that cost \$0 per year, it is a better economic decision to use the \$1,000 product (what we refer to as TCO - Total Cost of Ownership). Today the USGA supplies a basic version of our TMS at no additional cost to clubs, but we market a USGA-branded product that has more features, and companies like Eventman and Handicomp provide a basic product for a fee. The USGA goal is to provide a basic system available to all and used by some, but the USGA in no way attempts to discourage other suppliers from marketing competitive products. **The USGA learned that it is in the best interest of the industry to support a vibrant and competitive marketplace of ISVs.** Monopolies inhibit innovation and lead to higher prices and a stagnant product. Let's face it: if a "one size fits all" product supplied by the "state" in a monopolistic fashion were a viable strategy, the Berlin Wall would still stand and East Germany would be

thriving. When SG first announced its VMS, it was believed that SG was seeking a monopoly position by rendering other products unusable because ISV products would not have access to the SG database of golfer handicaps (the "CDH"). I believe that SG has made it very clear that this is not their position.

- In order to facilitate a robust and competitive marketplace, the USGA realised that it must provide a robust set of APIs (Application Program Interface - the way two programs exchange information) so that all ISVs can provide the same types of services to clubs that USGA-supplied software provides. With over 100 APIs, the USGA was "open" long before the industry ever adopted the word "open". In today's WHS world, this essentially means the ability to retrieve handicaps, post scores and access course details from the central database. In my view, SG must provide "equal access", and provide to ISVs the APIs used by the SG VMS to access the CDH. It's my understanding that SG will do just this - thus creating a level playing field.

The same principle of equal access applies to third party tee time systems. If SG plans to provide a tee time booking system

to clubs, so be it, but it should not be at the exclusion of other systems that clubs might choose.

The plan to provide handicaps to unaffiliated golfers is controversial, but it is an issue being discussed in virtually every national federation. The other CONGU federations have announced similar plans; Canada has provided handicaps to "nomadic" golfers for some time, as have a number of USGA state and regional associations. Handicapping is what makes golf unique, special and the social game that it is. Less than 20% of golfers worldwide have handicaps, and there would surely be much more golf played if more golfers had handicaps. SG makes that point, and I agree with them. Besides, why should only golfers who can afford to belong to a club be able to compete with a handicap, if we all agree that it is handicapping that makes golf the special game that it is?

When it's all said and done, I am confident that Scottish Golf will facilitate a robust software marketplace for its member clubs, and at the same time provide its own software for clubs that want a basic product to minimise software expense. **GCS**

## The Majestic way to a crystal-clear club crest

*Majestic Crystal has been supplying crested prizes for The Golf Club Secretary - Open Championship since the event started 25 years ago...*

Rob Smith's perceptive and detailed analysis of golf club websites in *The Golf Club Secretary* April newsletter highlighted that while there are many great ones, others certainly need improving or upgrading, and that might be something to ponder during lockdown. Clubs might also consider using the current downtime to sharpen or clean up their club crest. The crest is your club's history, reputation, brand, image, identity - however you wish to see it.

Often, when Majestic Crystal receives an order from a club manager, captain or competition secretary, they are told that clubs are only able to email a jpeg (.jpg) when artwork is requested. These are generally of a very small and fuzzy file size (maybe a 'right click' from their existing website) and often what you might term a '25th generation photocopy', either hand-drawn by a well-meaning member or recreated using a home computer.

There may be no need to 'rebrand' your entire club at great expense, and often considerable concern, to your members. On several occasions it has even been known for EGMs to be called to restore the original/traditional version!

Sometimes clubs commission a company to create a new logo, giving the artist a brief to redesign the crest but perhaps forgetting that although they have a 48in screen, the logo will eventually be used at 18mm on a golf ball or scorecard, where it will receive at best a cursory glance, or via a few thousand stitches on a sweater, where people will accept the limitations of an image made from lots of zig-zag lines.

Or it could end up being redrawn once again by Majestic Crystal for use on a piece of crystal at a variety of sizes, where it will generally be studied quite closely!

Unfortunately, jpegs of any size aren't scalable. For this you will need a vector file with the extension .ai, .eps or, quite possibly, a high-resolution .pdf. These are a series of curved lines and are quite like a cross between a colouring-in book and a jigsaw puzzle. In other words, each area between the lines can be independently or simultaneously coloured and taken apart or edited on screen if necessary.

With more than 20 years' experience creating vector artwork - and decent .jpegs for golf clubs who like their work - Majestic Crystal is one of the best at its chosen discipline and would be happy to redraw your club crest or recreate it as a lovely clear, sharp image. Please get in touch with them on 01526 378676 or 07824 902918, or check out <https://www.majesticcrystal.co.uk/artwork>, for a surprisingly economical estimate for artwork that you can then use on everything from your walls to your golf balls. You may even wish to have it engraved on some beautiful Majestic Crystal!

Regarding websites, Majestic Crystal has recently taken advantage of these quieter times to re-photograph every piece of its crystal, and pretty much all of its many popular combinations. There is a great search facility, which also offers the scope to put everything in price order for those looking for prizes, gifts and awards at various budgets.

*If you would like a complimentary assessment of your existing artwork and its possibilities, please contact **Majestic Crystal** on 01526 378676 or 07824 902918. **GCS***

# GRASS CLIPPINGS

## The new reality for golf clubs and greenkeepers

*Paul Woodham, General Manager of Agronomy at the STRI, provides an update on how golf course management is adapting to the current challenges.*

On 16th April, the government announced a continuation of the COVID-19 lockdown for at least three further weeks, with the next review due on 7th May. This means the situation has stayed much the same, with golf clubs becoming more settled in the reduced maintenance of courses. I believe all courses have adapted, with split-shift or skeleton-staff greenkeeping crews operating safely and within government rules. The changes in greenkeeping operations are first and foremost in the interest of staff safety and reducing the potential spread of coronavirus. These changes have also seen many businesses accessing the government Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), now extended until the end of June. This is essential for the industry as golf clubs continue to realise the impact of course and clubhouse closure.

'Guidance' for essential maintenance has been updated to cater for the demands of seasonal change. On a practical level, it is important that each course adjusts to its individual needs and prepares for an exit from closure, while also addressing essential agronomic work. My guess is that this will be a return to 'social golf' with safe distancing as we were before the closure of courses. That may even come before the end of the CJRS period. This will mean there is little need to expect competition-manicured surfaces. Indeed, any expectation of perfection will be far from the mark as it will take some time to condition the course and refine performance.

For now, the weather conditions will change in the coming weeks and grass and weed growth will increase. Essential mowing has been relatively easy to date, especially with the switch to sustained

dry weather and colder nights. Bunkers will need the odd rake to disturb sand and weeds. I would still promote cultural methods of control rather than relying on widespread use of total herbicide.



I am still of the mindset that there will be financial and course use pressures that will prevent any scheduled main season renovation or even intensive end-of-season work. It is important to prepare for this and use time safely and wisely. We will all need to adapt and I expect that, for many, there will be a reduction in greenkeeping resources for the foreseeable future... and I am talking years here! For the immediate future, budget and maintenance plans should be renewed to save money and adjust to maintenance without play. I previously said that we are in uncharted waters and a different plan for managing plant nutrition will be needed.

Here at STRI, work has started in applying for funding streams for clubs, and in looking to the future where some clubs will need to consider developing land to raise equity or even, in some cases, merging with other local courses. More interestingly, funding and road maps are being explored for clubs investigating alternative land use and diversification to engage the wider community while still operating as sustainably viable golf facilities and businesses. Closure of courses is a sobering thought but a reality, with two courses local to my office in receivership or on the brink. It will certainly be a case of survival of the fittest and best-managed clubs and those looking to reshape and diversify. [GCS](#)

## Jeff Bateman

The Golf Club Secretary newsletter was saddened to learn of the death of Jeff Bateman on 28th March. Jeff was a very good friend to The GCS in his role as printer for Eagle. He produced The GCS - Open Championship entry form/brochure, along with our scorecards and annual holiday chart, for many years. Jeff, who is survived by wife Mary and his two sons Ian and Tim, was always a splendid lunch companion and will be sadly missed by all. [GCS](#)

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COMING SOON

Golf and  
social distancing