

Council Update

The Manchester Golf Club



APRIL
UPDATE

Members Together

The weather's glorious, the course is springing to life and wildlife is returning. The Masters Tournament, Captain's Drive-In and first medal have come and gone without a ball being struck. Many of us are putting on carpets, chipping in the garden and watching re-runs of old majors. These are strange days indeed and definitely not the start to the season we wanted.

The good news from the lockdown is how diligently the UK population has followed the guidelines, with 85% complying in full—a fact appreciated by key workers across the land. Governments and health organisations around the world are reporting the success of lockdowns and, one-by-one, lifting restrictions. We've already completed over three weeks of our confinement and the next stage will hopefully soon pass.

In keeping with our fellow members we've busy lives and love nothing more than escaping to Hopwood for fresh air, fellowship and friendly competition. COVID-19 created no end of headaches for your club and council. It's not been much fun but, nothing in comparison to those affected by the tragedy of the disease or battling on the front line.

Thankfully, a great deal has been achieved for your club over the past few weeks and we are now in a position to make the most of the year and look ahead to the future. The support of members has been outstanding to date and our thanks goes to everyone for paying fees and pledging ongoing support. We share your frustration and hope the updates across the main aspects of the club are interesting and encouraging.

Greens

The photographs in this update were taken at the course recently and provide a sneak peak of the incredible work of Matt and his slimmed-down team of two. The dedication and commitment of the team cannot be over-stated, they are working wonders while diligently following Government and BIGGA guidelines. Matt is keeping members posted with a weekly blog and reports that:

- Tees and greens were scarified ahead of lockdown, putting us in good shape for the year
- Greens have been fertilised with a 6-week treatment and are being cut regularly at 5mm to protect the plant—coverage is excellent
- Tees, aprons, fairways and the semi rough are being regularly cut in line with the restrictions placed on courses
- The irrigation system is primed and working perfectly in ideal growing conditions
- Some fairways are being reshaped in the week ahead, taking advantage of colder night-time temperatures which are constraining growth

Critically, the success of our essential work programme ensures we will return to fantastic conditions shortly after restrictions are lifted.



Council Update



Handicaps & Comps

By carefully monitoring Government and England Golf guidance, we are preparing to return to the game we love as soon as possible. Whilst future restrictions on clubhouse and social distancing measures are unknown, there will be a full calendar, starting with Captain's Drive-in, aided by:

- Extending playing hours from first light if needed
- Piggybacking Comps with Captains Qualifiers
- Prioritising members by removing events like Invitation Day
- Playing on reserve dates set aside later in the season
- Holding comps on selected Sundays
- Following the COVID-19 Competition Process already defined and communicated

This will gain 8-10 weeks to make-up for golf lost in lockdown, ensuring we can play all our prestigious events in the 2020 season.

Finance

The team with the toughest challenges at the moment has been working incredibly hard to get us through these troubled times as best we can and in a position to build for the future by focusing on:

- Furloughing all staff bar the core team needed for essential course maintenance, office administration and health/safety requirements. By accessing the Government Staff Retention Scheme we will recover costs and retain our colleagues, whose ongoing support is so vital
- Engaging key suppliers and partners to agree financial support and payment holidays to preserve our cash
- Applying for all available Government and Agency rebates, grants and support programmes
- Assessing the Club's financial liquidity against a broad range of scenarios in light of many variables and unknowns—a prudent approach is being undertaken with ongoing reviews in the best interest of all members.

We are fortunate to have received strong support from members, with a large number of pledges to help the club and maintain membership. Thankfully, these far outweigh the very small number of requests for refunds or payment holidays. Membership backing for the club will get us through these troubled times as best we can and in a position to continue to develop the club to be one of the best in the Country.

Clubhouse, bar & catering

Even with the clubhouse closed and the majority of the team furloughed to save costs, we've managed to complete important tasks to prepare for our return.

- The clubhouse and kitchen were thoroughly cleaned immediately after lockdown
- A large proportion of our stock was protected and safely stored
- Additional security steps have been implemented to protect the clubhouse and our assets
- An abandoned, burnt-out car at on the farmer's land next to the driveway has been removed

Special thanks go to the team, who have co-operated so positively in difficult times, everyone wanted to do the best for the club to ensure we're ready to return soon.

Membership Marketing

Whilst it is a little challenging in the lockdown, we're raising the profile of the club and increasing member communication by:

- Running a pilot Google advertising campaign for Festival Week (primarily funded by Google) that has generated 343,000 ad impressions and 1,000 website visits
- Improving noticeboard communication—with more posters and updates
- Seeking your views through Members Together Updates which have generated over 85 pledges to date
- Setting-up a prototype of our new website on the V1 system, as well as looking better it is easier to book tee-times and promote the club
- Building a library of great course photography and video assets—we're on the look-out for more from members who are keen photographers
- Getting lots of help from the House of Golf team, including Brian's weekly emails which have been changed to give us all things to do at home
- Sharing communications—such as <https://bit.ly/mangc04>—with influential voices including England Golf, The R&A and key golf publications

And, there's lots more in store for the season ahead including some new playing opportunities when things are back on course



Captain's Concluding Comments

Following the unprecedented events of the last couple of months, my thanks go to all members for their continued support of our club—so too our incredible team of colleagues. Most importantly, I hope you and your families remain safe and in good health. Many members have partners/relatives working for the NHS and essential services and we extend our gratitude to all for their fantastic efforts.

Golf will resume as soon as possible. As I write, Austria is permitting golf and tennis to be played again. The Masters Tournament has already been rescheduled for the Autumn and, like Augusta, our greens will benefit from a two month rest before competition commences. So, be sure to practise on a fast putting mat ready for our return.