

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT CROSS PARTY GOLF GROUP

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 10th DECEMBER 2013 AT THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT, EDINBURGH

Present: Tavish Scott MSP (Deputy Convenor), Chic Brodie MSP, Murdo Fraser MSP, Neil Findlay MSP, Stewart Maxwell MSP, Hamish Grey (SGU), Alan Grant (EventScotland), Jim Gales, Stephen Cunningham and Peter Osbourne (Scottish Disability Golf Partnership), Gordon Todd (Scottish Enterprise), Chris Spencer (North Berwick Golf Club), Dr Allan Taylor (Abertay University), Christopher Wallace (Office of Tavish Scott MSP).

Apologies: John Pentland MSP, Dr Richard Simpson MSP, Brian Mair (PGA), Karin Sharp (SLGA), Jacqui Stone (SportScotland), Kim Atkinson (Scottish Sports Association), Andy Salmon (Scottish Golf), Jackie Davidson (ClubGolf).

1. Welcome and Apologies

The meeting recognised the tremendous contribution made to both the Parliament and golf by the late Convenor, David McLetchie MSP.

2. Minutes of 27 March 2013 Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of this meeting were approved. There were no matters arising.

3. Scottish Disability Golf Partnership

At the invitation of the Chair, representatives from the Scottish Disability Golf Partnership outlined the nature and scope of the work of their organisation.

4. Presentation from Hamish Grey

Hamish Grey (HG) gave a presentation on the state of Scottish Golf, including an outline of the economic impact of golf in Scotland, and golf club sustainability. The latter included an outline of the work of the Scottish Golf Union and Scottish Ladies' Golfing Association to support clubs. The presentation slides are appended to these minutes.

Questions and Discussion:

There followed a wide ranging discussion. The national facilities strategy for golf was outlined as being the focal point for the strategic consideration of any public investment (via **sportscotland**) in new or upgraded golf facilities. It was noted that in general Scottish golf was well provided for in terms of golf facilities.

Within the £1.171 billion pa total economic value of golf to Scotland, golf tourism represents circa £220m. It is considered that there is the opportunity to grow to this to £300m and a specific Scottish Golf Tourism Strategy has been developed to focus on achieving that. This includes marketing efforts on the back of Scotland hosting the 2014 Ryder Cup.

The need for golf to get the right balance in pricing membership and visitor golf and evidence of benefits to clubs from major golf events e.g. the Open and North Berwick in 2013, were discussed.

It was recognised that in order to grow golf tourism, healthy vibrant golf clubs are necessary so that there is a product to sell. This is why the golf bodies are focussing on business planning and governance issues with clubs – to build a sustainable future. Clubs are having to go to the market and be more customer focussed than has previously been the case. This is a good development in the medium to long term as it will help clubs become more viable. The link with the national junior golf programme, ClubGolf, is a good example of this and is seeing some excellent results in terms of numbers introduced to the game and moving into membership through exposure to the programme.

5. Any Other Business

Abertay University is looking to further develop golf management courses, possibly targeting China and other overseas students. HG outlined it is key to ensure any training relates to what the industry requires. The SGU would be happy to meet and discuss this further.

The Deputy Convenor thanked those who presented and those who attended.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 1.30pm. A date for the next meeting will be circulated.