

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT CROSS PARTY GOLF GROUP

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 15 MARCH, 2012 AT THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT, EDINBURGH

Present: David McLetchie MSP (Convenor), Chic Brodie MSP, John Pentland MSP, Fiona Farquharson (SLGA), Stuart Ferrier (**sportscotland**), Hamish Grey (SGU), Sheila Hartley (SLGA), Michael MacDougall (PGA), Brian McLeish (Scottish Enterprise), Heather Moir (PGA), Andy Salmon (Scottish Golf), Chris Spencer (Association of Golf Club Managers), Gemma Swinton (EventScotland) and Gordon Todd (Scottish Enterprise).

Apologies: Neil Findlay MSP, Murdo Fraser MSP, Stewart Maxwell MSP, Tavish Scott MSP, Dr Richard Simpson MSP, Jane Booth (PGA), Robbie Clyde (EventScotland), Jackie Davidson (ClubGolf), Daniel Gray (Scottish Sports Association), Andrew Mellon (Elmwood/BIGGA) and Alan Miller (**sportscotland**).

1. Minutes of 1 December, 2011 Meeting

The minutes of the 1 December, 2011 meeting were noted. All matters arising were covered on the agenda.

2. State of Scottish Golf Clubs

Andy Salmon presented on the current state of membership in golf clubs and the work undertaken by the SGU and SLGA to support golf clubs in what are difficult and challenging times. The key theme was that the number of members has been decreasing for a number of years, and that while clubs have cut costs as much as possible the real challenge remains to grow the business (members and visitors) to keep clubs and courses viable. In this respect the encouraging initiative of co-operative working between clubs in Linlithgowshire, in an effort to promote the game in their area, was highlighted as good practice.

There followed a wide ranging discussion which covered the role of ClubGolf in supporting clubs to introduce children to the game and convert more of them into junior members, the importance of visitor income and how access to international flights is critical to boosting income from overseas golfers. There is a particular concern that municipal courses and clubs are coming under increased pressure as members move to private clubs which no longer have waiting lists and are offering special deals.

The Equality Act was discussed and it was noted that the implementation of age related elements of the legislation had been deferred by the Government. It remains to be seen if age related elements are dropped entirely and this uncertainty is unhelpful.

3. SGU/SLGA Amalgamation

Significant progress has been made internally and it has been agreed by the SGU and SLGA that they will start formal amalgamation discussions once again in April after the SGU Chairman and President have personally met with all 16 of the SGU Areas.

4. Niddry Castle case and golfers insurance

It was noted that the case was going to appeal. The wider impact of the original court ruling has been to raise awareness in golf clubs of their responsibilities and the risks related to health and safety. This has led to increased interest in and use of the free health and safety service provided to clubs by the SGU and SLGA.

5. Possible change to British Standard Time

David McLetchie undertook to circulate to the group an update on the progress of the proposed legislation regarding BST in due course. In the interim it was noted that the possible changes do not seem to be a pressing issue for golf clubs at present.

This being her last meeting, the Convenor thanked Sheila Hartley of the SLGA for her input to Cross Party Group meetings and wished her well in her retirement.

There being no other business, the meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Convenor. A date for the next meeting will be circulated.