

Areas & Counties Newsletter



Dear Secretary

Welcome to the latest edition of our monthly newsletter, keeping you and others fully up-to-date with our latest activities during a busy spell in the golfing year. After a fine period of weather, I hope you have been enjoying some time on the fairways and I look forward to meeting many of you throughout the summer.

CLUB CONSULTATIONS TO HELP SHAPE FUTURE OF GAME

Consistent with the consultation approach for the strategic direction for Scottish Golf, we have now confirmed the initial Club Consultation meetings through the first three weeks of June.

Having met with Area and County representatives earlier in the year, the feedback was that it would make sense to offer a club forum opportunity so that we can hear direct from clubs about the specific challenges facing them and share and debate some of the potential strategic solutions. The draft strategic priorities will then be sent to all club, Area, County and partner contacts for further feedback and dialogue where appropriate.



The meetings to date have been very positive and outlined our main key strategic priority areas, highlighting the need and opportunities for growth in golf throughout Scotland.

Once the club consultation has been completed, there will be communications with the Areas and Counties around key priority themes and objectives of delivering greater investment locally throughout Scotland, with one objective being to increase the investment for golf in Scotland and also for Areas and Counties.

This could include help and assistance with events, more performance coaching joined up with the development and national programmes and enhanced Area and County team championships with enhanced prizes and better formats. I look forward to further discussions with you on this and will update you further following our club consultations next month.

[> View more information on club consultations](#)

MARKETING WORKSHOPS RATED A HUGE SUCCESS

I am delighted to say that we completed our series of six regional club marketing workshops at Hags Castle GC recently, attended by 60 clubs and 96 delegates in total. The feedback has been hugely positive, with a delegate satisfaction rate of 90% and a presenter rating of 93%. The presentation focused on practical support for clubs, highlighting best practice examples, social media planning, website building, photography and tools for the job.

We have already seen some improved work being delivered by clubs since attending. To build on the momentum, we are in the process of updating the tools and templates on the Club Marketing section of our website.

JUNIOR SCOTTISH OPEN RETURNS

We are pleased to welcome the return of the Junior Scottish Open this summer, a fun event for young golfers played in a team format. On the eve of a number of the world's best golfers teeing up at Dundonald Links, the Junior Scottish Open will be staged nearby over the excellent municipal layout of Troon Links, Lochgreen on Tuesday 11 July.

After the success of last year's inaugural Junior Scottish Open at Fortrose & Rosemarkie, the event has been extended this year to involve regional qualifying ahead of the finale in Ayrshire. The event is open to all affiliated clubs in Scotland who are invited to enter a team of three juniors (aged under-16 at 11 July 2017), to be accompanied by one adult player.

After the opening Dunnikier Park qualifier, further regional events are to follow at reigning Scottish Golf Club of the Year, Muir of Ord, on Sunday 11 June, Aboyne on Sunday 2 July, and at ex-Junior Club of the Year winner, Peebles, on Tuesday 4 July. Ayr Seafield and Callander are also holding events on 25 June.



The event is aimed at attracting juniors new to competition, creating a learning opportunity in a more relaxed environment, the opportunity to play different courses and build confidence to take part in future events. The leading teams from each regional qualifier will book a place in the Junior Scottish Open at Lochgreen.

[> View dates and how to enter](#)

NEW SEASONAL RECRUIT FOR EVENTS STAFF

To help deliver our summer programme of events at all levels, we recently recruited a Seasonal Events Assistant. Sean Martin, a Stirling University Graduate, joined the team on 29 May and will be involved straight away with the delivery of both the Carrick Neill Men's Open at Western Gailes this week and the Women's Amateur at Royal Aberdeen. The role is initially for a 12-week period and we envisage Sean attending the vast majority of events during that period.

SCOTTISH GOLF MEMBERSHIP CARD OFFERS

We now have 25 clubs signed up to the Scottish Golf Members Clubhouse, offering preferential green fee rates to fellow members, while we are working on a campaign to encourage more golfers to register. With 57,000 golfers now registered for the Members Clubhouse, this platform provides a great opportunity for clubs to market with us. We would be delighted if you could please highlight this opportunity to clubs on your travels.

Some of the key benefits to participating clubs include: Generating additional visitor green fee income; raising the profile of your club among fellow golf club members in Scotland and adding value to being a member of a golf club in Scotland. We have created a promotional resource (link below) to help clubs better understand the benefits.

[> Scottish Golf Membership Card | Promotional Resource](#)

CARNOUSTIE BOOST JUNIOR GOLF AHEAD OF THE OPEN

It is always encouraging to hear of the positive work being achieved 'out in the field' by our Regional Club Development Officers, with Carnoustie Golf Links a great example in recent weeks. They are looking to tap into the buzz ahead of next year's Open Championship to develop significant numbers into their junior academy.

Led by new senior PGA assistant, Keir McNicoll, the Angus facility has taken successful early steps in implementing a new junior coaching programme aligned to ClubGolf. Carnoustie Golf Links is to invest 600 hours of FREE coaching with the PGA professional team, including Keir, Sean Fay and Rebecca Tully, to drive the project forward. They will deliver the ClubGolf programme and also pay 100% of the cost of junior memberships to local clubs and support transition.

[> View more information](#)

FEMALE GOLF: ENCOURAGING SIGNS

We are very aware of the challenges in the female game, but I wanted to update you on some positive signs. At performance level, we have been encouraged by the performances from a number of players this year, including teenager Shannon McWilliam, who was runner-up in a strong field at the Helen Holm Women's Scottish Open.

Post amalgamation, we have been working hard to provide more opportunities for the women and girls, including on winter camps with their male counterparts. One priority for us is to also allow the girls to test themselves outwith Scotland and gain experience. We have an Under-16 match against England in September, as well as opportunities for Under-14 players in Ireland and England this year.



We have also been running 36-hole development events at quiet periods to give younger girls more competitive opportunities. We are seeing signs of progress with three Scottish Golf Academy players winning their Women's County Championships – Jillian Farrell, Kirsten Brown and Anna MacKay (pictured left, the Fife champion).

We are working hard to try and encourage more people into the game, notably through female and junior initiatives, to position golf as a more family-friendly sport and a game that is accessible to everyone. Our national programmes, ClubGolf for juniors and Get into Golf for adult beginners, are helping in that quest.

Using Get into Golf as an example, of the almost 1,200 golfers who took part in the programme in 2016, 66% were female. We regularly hear from clubs about the successes they are having in attracting females via Get into Golf programmes. Our current membership statistics are also showing a growth in the women's playing category, so there are hopefully positive times ahead.

On behalf of Scottish Golf, thank you for your continued support. As we seek to strengthen our communications, we would be grateful if you could distribute the newsletter to the rest of your committee.

Best wishes,

Blane Dodds, Chief Executive