

BLACKFORD GOLF CLUB

Minutes of the 119th Annual General Meeting held in the clubhouse of the Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society on Tuesday 24th January 2017

Present Douglas Macfarlane(Captain), Frank Robson (Secretary and Treasurer), John Stevenson, Alf Cattenach, Chris Hardie, Ian McLeish, Tom Mitchell, Miles Morrison David Paterson and Tim Straton

Apologies Brian Buckner, Alan Clark, Bill Geddes, Bill Hannay, Bob Hay-Smith, Ken Hutchison, Tony Kelly, Drew Lamont, Ken Lewandowski, Alan Mackay, John Matheson, Iain McLaren, Paul Murray Smith, John Naylor, Donald Ness, Hugh Neilson, David Nicolson, George Preston, Jimmy Rodgers, Stan Russell, Ian Starkey, Colin Stevenson, Mike Thomson, Norman Walker, Graeme Watherston, Keith Wilkinson and John Williams.

Deceased members Those present observed a minutes silence in memory of Bob Buckle, Ian Morrison and Colin Crole.

Minutes The Minutes of the 118th AGM held on 15th March 2016 were approved by common consent.

Matters Arising There were no matters arising not covered in the agenda.

Captain's Remarks The Captain reported that that club was in good health with a full membership of 72. The average attendance at outings was 29 – our kindred clubs envy that statistic.

In May Blackford was at Gullane No 2 where we had to contend with very strong winds. Bruce Tait won with 32 points. In June we enjoyed Bruntsfield in immaculate condition. New member Miles Morrison won with 40 points. Kilspindie was as usual very popular in July. Despite some rain in the later part of the day John Stevenson returned a commendable 42 points, George Preston had a brace of 2's and Martin Bryden returned a gross 74. In kind weather at Aberdour Derek McGillivray won with 41 points and the first shot of the day very nearly gave Bill Hannay a hole in one. There was a Captain's Day in September at Goswick where Blackford last played in 1956. 16 members played the links in, at times, a thick haar. Bill Hannay was the victor with 37 points.

In matches we halved with Murrayfield Council, New Club and Caermont and beat Bruntsfield Allied. All in all 2½ to 1½ in our favour – better than in recent years but “could do better”.

In the Sivewright Trophy our team lost to RBS in the first round. We entered a team of four in Edinburgh Rotary's Charity day at Bruntsfield – no prizes but a very good day out.

The Annual Dinner in October was well attended by 64 members and guests. It was the 40th anniversary of the first dinner at BLGS. Ken Hutchison's grace was of his usual high standard and the principal speaker George Macgregor OBE was very well received.

A new range of Blackford golf wear was launched at the dinner and there has been a good response. Our thanks are due to John Stevenson for delivering this project.

In early 2016 Martin Bryden completed an updated History of Blackford Golf Club which has won much praise from members and others. A copy now rests in the Members Library at the R & A. Our hearty thanks go to Martin and also to John Stevenson who arranged design, project management and printing. Production costs were covered by a small number of individuals and members responded generously with donations.

The Captain thanked Paul Murray Smith (Vice Captain) and Colin Stevenson (Match Secretary) for their support. He thanked the other committee members, John Matheson and John Stevenson, and Donald Ness our auditor.

Lastly he thanked the Secretary and Treasurer, Frank Robson, quoting Martin Bryden who says in the History that the long line of secretaries has arguably done most to ensure that Blackford has lasted as long as it has!

Secretary's Report At the end of 2016 the Club had the maximum number of playing members – 72. In addition there were 7 non-playing and 4 honorary members. 6 new members were admitted during the year. Attendances at the outings and dinner were healthily ahead of the previous year.

Contact with members is now largely by e-mail which has reduced secretarial costs significantly.

A new range of golf clothing was made available in October. There was a good response of orders for Xmas and it is hoped there will be high demand in 2017.

5 outings have been arranged for 2017 with visits to Gullane, Elie, Kilspindie, Aberdour and Murrayfield.

Accounts The 2016 accounts show some significant improvements on the previous year with an excess of income over expenditure of £1553. The most important of these stemmed from the publication of the Club History. The cost of publication was generously covered by committee members and members gave generous donations on receipt of their copies. A total of £1335 was received in donations. Other areas which provided positive contributions were secretarial costs (down due to use of e-mailing) and profit from sales of the new range of clothing.

At the year end the Club had £2559 in the bank account. The target was to achieve a year end balance of at least £2000 - this being necessary to meet bills which arise before the collection of annual subscriptions in March/April. The challenge ahead is to maintain the £2k balance.

Subscriptions The subscription for 2017 would be maintained at £40. It was however pointed out that with increasing green fees the subscription would probably rise in the following year. New members would be asked to subscribe £60 in their first year; this acknowledges the fact that they receive a tie and a copy of the Club History.

Elections Paul Murray Smith was elected as Captain having been proposed by Douglas Macfarlane and seconded by Ian McLeish.

In the absence of the new Captain, who was unable to attend because of illness, Douglas Macfarlane remained in the chair.

It was proposed by Douglas Macfarlane that Frank Robson continue as Hon Secretary and Treasurer and this was seconded by Tim Straton.

John Matheson had been proposed as Vice-Captain by Paul Murray Smith and seconded by Frank Robson.

Colin Stevenson had indicated he would be prepared to continue as match Secretary. He was proposed by John Stevenson and seconded by Frank Robson.

Donald Ness had indicated he would be pleased to continue as Hon Auditor. His appointment was proposed by Tim Straton and seconded by Ian McLeish.

Paul Murray Smith proposed and Frank Robson seconded Chris Hardie as a new committee member.

Two members were proposed for Honorary membership. Martin Bryden the author of the Blackford History, was proposed by Douglas Macfarlane and seconded by John Stevenson. Jimmy Rodgers, who was captain in 1997-98, was proposed by Douglas Macfarlane and seconded by Tom Mitchell.

All the above appointments were unanimously approved.

Any Other Business

John Stevenson gave a brief introduction to the newly designed web-site which will go live in a few days. This will be much more user friendly and details will be emailed to all members. The web-site design had been carried out free of charge by Glasgow Creative – John Stevenson's company.

The Secretary explained that the committee proposed to set up a small working party to revise the Club Rules/Constitution. The Rules were drawn up in 1879 and have been amended once with a fountain pen! In response to a question it was stated that there was no significant change implied in this update. We have been asked for copies of our constitution by Lothians Golf Association and by our bank and have been embarrassed by the state of our Rules.

End of meeting As there was no other business the meeting closed at 6.35pm. The Secretary proposed a vote of thanks to Douglas Macfarlane for his considerable efforts as Captain for the previous two years. Members accepted the outgoing Captain's invitation to join him for a drink.