



All-Party Parliamentary Group for Golf

Ordinary Meeting Minutes

1800, 6 February 2019, Committee Room 5

Meeting commenced 1800

In attendance

Members: Stephen Gethins MP (in the Chair); Baroness Nye of Lambeth; Lord Lennie; Lord Wallace of Tankerness

Honorary Life Member: John Simpson

Organisational Associate Members: Mike Round (Ladies European Tour); Ben Hunter, John Maguire (Richmond Golf Club); Les Howkins (BIGGA); Richard Shaw (Mytime Active)

Individual Associate Members (all, no affiliation): Paul Gilbert; Steve Alabaster; Mark Timlett; Katherine Nathan; Stephen Smith; Deanne Tager Smith; Adrain Hyrylanian-Trett

Secretariat: Jack Baker

Other: Vikrant Gurung (On Course Foundation); Robert Alabaster

Welcome

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the meeting, and particularly:

New Honorary Life Members:

- John Yapp
- Wilma Erskine
- Diane Bailey MBE
- Andrew Morgan

New Organisational Associate Members:

- IMG

New Individual Associate Members:

- Robert McGurk
- Gareth Williams

Apologies

Members: Laurence Robertson MP; Rt Hon Dame Cheryl Gillan MP; John Mann MP; Dame Eleanor Laing MP; Lord Moynihan; Craig Tracey MP

Honorary Members: Jim Gales MBE; John Yapp; Helen Melville; Diane Bailey MBE; Andrew Morgan; Karl McCartney

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Organisational Associate Members: Rob Maxfield, Maureen Roberts, Jonathan Wright (The PGA); Lee Strutt, Lesley Webb, Jason Neve (Royal Automobile Club); Stephen Lewis (Golf Foundation); Terry McConnell (Clacton Golf Club); Patrick Cunningham, Colin Ballantyne (NAPGC); Alistair Booth (Frilford Heath Golf Club/GTC); Fiona Lyttle (GTC); Richard Haygarth (UK Golf Federation); Jim Croxton, Sami Strutt (BIGGA); Philip Morley (BGIA); Deb Bufton (NGCAA); Mandy Jarvis (Community Golf CIC); Vivien Saunders, Fletcher Ransberry (AGCO); Andrew Cooke (Golf Tourism England); John Gerrie (The R&A); Bob Williams (GCMA)

Individual Associate Members (all, no affiliation): Gavin Corbett; Jane Carter; Nicole Wheatley; Emma Ballard; Robert McGurk; Gary Salt; Chantel Scherer; Jim McLaggan; Paul Williams; Geoff Russell; Alex Giachetti; Rudi Guraziu; Brad Mclean; John Brooke; Andy Lloyd-Skinner; Sarah Forrest; Gareth Williams; Tony Hanson; Ketih Waters; Neil Burke; Lauren Blease; Glen Halsey; Caron Morton; James Edwards; Eddie Bullock; Duncan Kelso; Tom Abbott; Jon Earl; Linda Segerstam; Michael Coffey; John Roger Jones; Andy Pollock; Peter Gwilliam; Andy Hiseman; Liam Robb; Trevor Martin; John Weir; Liz Kahn

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous Group meeting were considered an accurate account.

Matters arising

- The Group was looking to schedule future panel discussions on disability golf and women and girls golf.
- The Group was liaising with The R&A on what more it could do to support work around the health benefits of golf.

Correspondence

- Co-Chair Craig Tracey MP wrote to Group supporters The PGA, The R&A and PING with an update on the Group's work.
- The Group wrote to new Honorary Life Members, who were announced at the annual dinner.
- Information was received regarding The British Golf Show, due to take place at Wycombe Air Park on 17-18 May 2019, with a focus on golf technology and travel.
- An email was received regarding opportunities to develop further engagement and awareness of visually impaired and blind golf.
- Co-Chair Craig Tracey MP received an enquiry regarding PGA educational provision for those with learning disabilities, and was liaising with The PGA.
- An invitation was received from London Scottish Golf Club for Members to visit and play.
- An update was received from Golf in Society regarding their work to provide golf sessions to families living with dementia and Parkinson's disease. **Action: future meeting looking at the health benefits of golf for those with long term conditions?**

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- An email was received from North Oxford Golf Course, who are fighting against the proposed allocation of the course in a local plan alteration for housing by Oxford City Council. The Group had shared with England Golf who were supporting. **Action: provide a supportive letter?**

Group activity report

Parliamentary

At the second reading of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions) Bill in the House of Lords, Lord Rogan referenced the return of The Open to Royal Portrush for the first time since 1951, and that all four Championship days had sold out for the first time in the 148-year history of the event.

In a Westminster Hall debate on Leaving the EU, Dr Philippa Whitford MP referenced the economic benefits of golf tourism to her constituency.

In a Westminster Hall debate on local sporting heroes, Nic Dakin MP paid tribute to Tony Jacklin's golf career.

At Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy questions, Gregory Campbell MP raised asked the Minister whether it would be a good idea to incorporate The Open into the tourism sector deal as it returned to Northern Ireland in 2019.

In a House of Lords debate on sport, recreation and the arts, in arguing for the human right to non-discrimination and equality in sport, Lord Moynihan referenced the need to recognise Georgia Hall's victory in the Women's British Open as much as Francesco Molinari's success. In the same debate, Lord Parekh referenced the important role that golf can play in providing opportunities for physical activity for older people.

At Business questions, Paul Sweeney MP raised the closure of council-owned golf courses in his constituency, as well as a range of other sports facilities.

At DCMS questions, Gregory Campbell MP asked the Minister what could be done to promote a summer of sport in his constituency including The Open championship. The Minister responded with his support and encouragement for the economic value of major sporting events.

In a general debate in the House of Commons on sport in the UK, Bill Grant MP referenced golf courses in his constituency, including Turnberry.

Stephen Gethins MP tabled an early day motion on the Phoenix Cup, played between golfers with disabilities in Florida in October 2018.

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Public

The Group held its annual dinner in the House of Lords and raised money for the Golf Foundation, as well as presenting its annual awards.

The Secretariat noted the Group's twitter account, @ParliamentGolf.

AOB

There was a suggestion that the Group look to arrange a game of golf. The Chair stated that he would let the Secretariat consider proposals, and explained that the Group had originally been established to provide a forum for discussion of issues in golf, to advance and discuss positive impacts and address challenges too.

There being no other business, the Chair brought the main business of the meeting to a close.

Main business concluded 1815

Presentation: On Course Foundation

The Chair welcomed John Simpson and Vikrant Gurung from the On Course Foundation.

Simpson made a short presentation on the work of the On Course Foundation to support injured and wounded service personnel and veterans through golf.

There was discussion of the programme of support that the On Course Foundation provided.

Simpson noted that the On Course Foundation had 870 members, including 280 full or part time working in the golf industry. The charity has grown to operate in the USA too. Simpson noted that a growing number of injuries, especially PTSD meant that the work of the charity was as relevant and as powerful ever.

The Simpson Cup was discussed, which involved an American team and a British team, competing to raise the profile of the On Course Foundation and raise money for the charity.

Simpson discussed the value of what the On Course Foundation provides to those with incredibly bad injuries, bringing people back together, instilling self-confidence and self-esteem, and providing them with the tools to gain employment.

A short video was shown illustrating the skills of players.

Gurung spoke about his experience, following a serious injury whilst on service in Afghanistan in 2009. He explained that following his injury, he thought that his life was over, but the On Course Foundation provided opportunities to play sport, get active and out of the house, and meet, talk and learn from people with similar injuries.

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Gurung explained that he now worked part time for the On Course Foundation, and was incredibly grateful for all the support that the charity had provided him with.

Simpson highlighted that the charity had been able to help some amazing people, who have amazing stories.

Opening to questions, there were an increasing number of women benefiting from the charities services, particularly those suffering from mental health injuries.

The potential for golf to be played at the Paralympics was raised and discussed, and Simpson noted his thanks to The R&A for their support to the On Course Foundation.

On immediate development plans, Simpson noted that whilst the charity currently had around 800 members, there were more injured personnel that could be reached and helped. The foundation was also investigating supporting those who had suffered injuries in the police and fire brigade too.

It was noted that the Simpson Cup had been covered by Sky Sports, but Simpson hoped that further coverage would be possible in the future.

The health benefits of golf were raised, and it was noted that the On Course Foundation's work clearly showed that golf was a sport for all, and could deliver health benefits for all.

On those who had been through the On Course Foundation's programme and were now in employment, the type of employment varied depending on injury. Some were working in club shops, others were greenkeeping, or working for golf manufacturers. Simpson noted the importance of flexible employment.

The impact of PTSD was discussed, and Gurung gave details of his former colleagues who had struggled with the condition.

The Chair closed with thanks for a humbling presentation.

Action: Group to write to Armed Forces Minister to set up a meeting.

Meeting closed at 1905

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