

E.G.M. MINUTES
24th October 2021
Held in the Clubhouse
6:00 p.m.

Attendance

Jimmy Woods, Denise Kavanagh, Stuart White, John O'Callaghan, Noel McCartan, Julie McCartan, Pat McCarthy, Kieran Murphy, Eric Nunan, Pat Kenny, Pat Noonan, Jerry O'Riordan, Mona Moynihan, Paul McDonald, Vincent Kearney, Donal O'Keeffe, Willie Sweeney, Ray McGrath, Pat Walsh, Pat Donnellan, Sarah Donnellan, Elaine Murphy, Laura Funge, Noel Ivanoff, Paul Dobey, Tony Kinsella, Pat Kinsella, Mary Osborne, Ann Morgan, John Morgan, Celia O'Riordan, Mags Greenan, Mairead Sunderland, Conor Hanniffey, Marion Siggins, Eamonn Siggins, Mary O'Connor, Alan Gray, Robert O'Connor, Ciaran O'Donovan, Tom Foster, Seamus O'Donohoe, Keith Reid, Alex Reid, Donal Sheehan, Elaine Fitzgerald, John Fitzgerald, Mary Cooper, Bernard Byrne, Paul Doran, Deirdre Kearney, Mairead Carty, Adrian Copeland, Karl Caulfield, Colin Sunderland, Ann Bernie, Pat O'Shea, George Kilbride, Mary Kilbride, Therese Steedman, Eileen Cullen, Miriam Ryan, John Ryan, Terry Noone, Tom Smith, Tina Smith, Vincent Kavanagh. Mary Cleere, Keith Palaka. Manager David Colley also attended.

Apologies

Pascal Storan, June Storan, Andrea Godkin, Margaret Jones, Trish O'Connor, Mary Halford, Catherine Quinn, Seamus Kennelly, Gay Gahan, Pat Walters, Janet Ryder, David Bolger, Orlagh Downey, Brendan Fagan, John O'Riordan, Danny Cooper, John Creagh, Gaye Creagh. Pat Roche.

Mr Captain called the meeting to order and welcomed everybody. He then requested permission to record the meeting to assist with the taking of minutes. The recording will be destroyed when the minutes are transcribed. Permission granted.

Mr Captain then addressed the meeting

Thank you all for taking the time out to attend this EGM. This is a one item agenda and the proposal in reality, is only a small change from the way we do business at the moment thanks to the forward thinking of many committees that have preceded this current one. It is largely what can be described as "under the bonnet" stuff and in the main is about providing continuity in the way we do business, separating the golf side of our club from the business side. We will have a short presentation and then the floor will be open for comments or questions. It is late in the year to implement many of the changes proposed, and I am particularly thinking of the nominations committee. This lateness is of course due covid and the inability to have an EGM until now. It will maybe take up to a year to get where we want to be. However we have to start somewhere, and if this proposal is accepted by you tonight the structure will commence after our AGM on 4th December. As it is a one item agenda, questions will be limited to the business at hand, however the bar will be open after the meeting and the committee will be here to take on board any other comments or issues which, if appropriate can be brought forward to the AGM in December.

I'd like to thank the sub-committee for getting us here today, under the stewardship of Paul McDonald and this might be a good time for Paul to say a few words.

Paul McDonald

Thank you Mr Captain and thanks to those of you who have come along this evening.

I would like to take a few minutes to outline the reasons behind this initiative and the steps the Executive Committee have taken in considering the matter and how we have sought to get as many views as possible before formally presenting the proposals to you, the members of Courtown Golf Club, here tonight.

As you will recall from the newsletter of 24th April Golf Ireland was officially launched as the country's new governing body in January of this year and one of the first things they did was to ask clubs to have a fresh look at their Governance structures- how their clubs are run.

They set out their thinking in a detailed 'Governance Guide for Clubs'. Following on from the National Sports Policy, produced by the Department of Media, Arts, Sport and the Gaeltacht (which requests the adoption of a governance code for all sports governing bodies) Golf Ireland felt obliged to promote good governance amongst their members and thus arose the Golf Ireland request to clubs. In making this request, G.I. asked that clubs approach the exercise with an open mind while embracing the principles of equality and inclusion. They also requested that clubs take a gradual, incremental view approach to the exercise and were conscious of the fact that a 'one size fits all' approach was not going to work.

The Executive Committee have considered this matter very seriously and have put a lot of thought into this issue before bringing this issue to you at tonight's EGM and I would just like to quickly summarise the journey.

The topic of Governance was a standing item at each monthly meeting since December last. It was discussed at each of those meetings in some detail as our thinking on the matter evolved. A sub-committee of experienced former club officials and other members was formed and met on several occasions through Zoom to discuss the matter in great detail.

The sub-committee was Mona Moynihan, Jim French, Vincent Kearney, Ann Morgan, Mary Cooper, Paul Dobey, Pat Walsh, Mary Halford, Noel McCartan and Mary Osborne. It is true to say that every issue and possible permutation was considered from every angle.

Members of the Executive Committee have attended online seminars from G.I. on the subject and discussed the governance issues with club officials from many other clubs in Wexford, Leinster and beyond.

Newsletters were sent to all members in April and August to keep them informed of developments and the August note sought the written views of the wider membership. This generated a level of discussion- formal and informal and the members of the Executive have engaged with, and listened to the views of the broader membership throughout.

There were a number of written responses to the request and I would like to thank people for taking the time to respond. Most were very supportive, one or two sought clarification on specific points and I think it is fair to say there was no opposition to the proposed changes.

I would stress that all the views have been listened to and carefully considered in bringing these proposals to you here tonight. An information evening on this had been planned for the summer but covid restrictions conspired against us. I think it may be useful to briefly recap (as outlined in the August and October newsletter) what the specific changes proposed to the club structure are:

The business affairs of the Club should be organised and run by a Management Committee comprising ten members who will oversee all business matters pertaining to the running of the Club.

That the club has one President and that this role would be rotated each year between a male and female member.

The Management Committee will be made up by a Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, the Captains of the Ladies and Gents sections and five members elected at the AGM. The President can attend meetings of the Management Committee but will not have voting rights. The current structure of individual Ladies and Gents sections will be retained.

The terms of office for each of the named positions to be two years with a maximum of two consecutive terms.

A Nominations Committee will be established to help identify potential members of the Management Committee or other positions although members can also be nominated to these positions through the traditional routes.

The club will adhere to the G.I. recommended gender balance in establishing committees- 30% male representation, 30% female and 40% either gender.

I want to again assure you that the matter has been given a very high level of attention and scrutiny by all concerned. We feel the amount of change being proposed is appropriate for Courtown Golf Club and bespoke for the club. There are a number of further initiatives coming down the track from G.I. and these range from guidelines around club planning to issues around adopting a single club structure. Adopting these current changes will position us as a forward thinking, progressive club which will have the correct structure to meet these challenges while enabling us through continuity and enhancing our governance, to provide the best golfing experience to our members.

With that I'd like to hand you back to the Captain.

Mr Captain

So, what are we trying to do here? We are seeking to set up a management committee which will provide continuity in leadership for the club. It is only natural that past captains will come to the table with different ideas, but under the current system this happens every year and it is difficult to see out a project within that 1 year period. There have been some great ideas over the years, but unless they are developed and written down, they remain just that..ideas. We did consider the level of portfolios and skills needed and this is how we arrived at a reduced committee size from 14 to 10 which we believe is an appropriate size of committee based on advice from Golf Ireland. This is about giving the committee the tools to see the priorities through and empowering the said committee to do so. The existing members of committee can serve a four year term, elected annually, while the proposed committee can serve a four year year term but are elected for two years at a time. There will be a new position of chairperson, which is currently held by one of the captains', and this office can also serve four years, elected for two years at a time. So you can see it is not a seismic change in the existing structure. We also feel it is important that both captains serve on the management committee, but naturally their service on the management committee will be for one year only by virtue of their office.

President

We are proposing to have one President alternating between male and female members each year. One president is about embracing the spirit of equality and inclusion in Courtown Golf Club. It is about bringing together Men's and Ladies golf, it is about having one president presiding over both sides of the club. By rotating each year on an equal basis, it shows our commitment to equality and inclusion.

Nominations Committee

The Nominations committee is about Courtown Golf Club openly and actively putting measures in place to encourage members to put themselves forward for roles within the

club. It serves two purposes. It is like a recruitment agency and it is also a vehicle for members who are interested in serving on committee to make that interest known. One of the roles of this committee is to make every member aware of the volunteering opportunities that exist to serve the clubs interest. It is expected that this process will lead to a more eclectic and diverse committee.

So that is it in a nutshell. At this stage I would welcome your comments and questions after which we will vote on the proposal, but just before we do that I call on Hon Sec Mary to read out a statement from our President Jim French.

“It is with regret that I cannot attend the EGM due to a positive covid test a few days ago. Thankfully the symptoms are mild enough.

I wish to confirm my support for the resolution before you in its totality. Having served as Treasurer for a number of years, Captain and now President I appreciate the importance of continuity in management of the club. The nominations committee will be a great assistance to seeking out talent for future committees by drilling down into the skill set of our membership. I believe the position of one President, alternating each year between male and female is a demonstration of the club's commitment to equality. I would urge you to support this motion.”

Thank you
Jim French

Mr Captain then called for questions from the floor.

There were no questions.

Mr Captain then asked for a show of hands in support of the proposed constitution.

There was a unanimous show in favour and the proposal was deemed to be adopted.

Mr Captain thanked everyone for their support and said it was much appreciated.

The meeting was closed.