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Dear Member

## **Membership Renewal 2021-22**

### **From the Management**

Firstly, with everything that is happening in the world at the moment, we would like to wish you and your family a belated happy, healthy, and safe, New Year. As you can imagine, like many other businesses around the country, 2020 was the golf club's toughest year to date, the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly been the hardest of times in which we have had to manage the golf club through, and some difficult decisions, both financially and emotionally, have had to be made along the way.

This time last year we were sitting looking at the diary and planning for the year ahead and was delighted to see that the diary was brimming with various societies, private functions, and social events; along with all of the traditional golf events that we hold throughout the year. We believed we had the platform for 2020 to be our best year to date. Fast forward to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March and we were looking at the diary on the first day of the first lockdown wondering if we would be able to hold any events during the year. Lockdown 1 lasted 7 weeks and 2 days, and even then, we were only able to open the pro shop on a very limited basis and the clubhouse would not open until July 10<sup>th</sup> - just in time to 'celebrate' its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Again, this was on a limited basis with plenty of restrictions that needed to be put in place. From the Clubhouse closing on 23<sup>rd</sup> March with a diary bursting with events, we now looked on 15 weeks and 4 days later, when the clubhouse reopened, at a diary that looked like it had used enough rubber to last a lifetime!! Sadly, this trend continued, and we were unable to hold a single function from 23<sup>rd</sup> March right up until the time of writing this letter, and sadly, we do not see that changing soon either. Unfortunately, losing these events means a lot of lost income and this equated to a decline of more than 75% of clubhouse turnover. As you can imagine this meant hard decisions had to be made and unfortunately, we had to let numerous members of staff go during this period, which was not a decision we took lightly, but equally a decision that was needed in order to keep us battling through these tough times. We thank those staff for their hard work over the period they were with us and wish them every success for the future.

Not all was lost though, we still managed to hold the annual Club Championships, albeit on a new date in September and we congratulate Shane Cowie on his first Men's Club Championship win and Di Little for another win in the Ladies Club Championship. Numerous 9-hole Captains charity events were held throughout the summer and were very well supported, the highlight of these being the Greenkeepers Revenge event which we think will become a permanent fixture in the diary for years to come. On 26<sup>th</sup> September we were delighted to be able to 'open' the new 18-hole layout for one day only to all the members and again, this was very well supported with plenty of positive feedback.

We are fortunate that after the first lockdown, golf returned stronger than ever and as a result, we managed to reduce our overall losses from 75% to 60%.

We would like to thank all our staff for working so hard through these difficult times. Trace has moved from back of house in the kitchen to become Operations Manager in the clubhouse, and has worked tirelessly, together with the FOH team, to ensure all restrictions have been put in place correctly and that both members and visitors are adhering to these new restrictions. We thank Marc and the rest of the team in the kitchen for keeping up their high standards during these difficult times and coming up with new ideas to deal with the

blows that this pandemic has thrown at us. We sincerely hope that the Clubhouse can recover from these lockdowns, and that no more staff cuts need to be made.

The golf course was one of the areas where we had to cut the budget due to the COVID-19 pandemic and we thank Harry, Steve, and Lee for their hard work in keeping the golf course up to its fantastic standards that we see year in and year out. A special recognition must go to Harry, who has worked tirelessly throughout the year, he was, and continues to be, a massive help in maintaining the golf course whilst we were closed (believe it or not grass still grows when golfers are not playing!!)

Laurie and Tom have worked extremely long hours in being coffee baristas, bar stewards, as well as Golf Professionals, and again we thank them enormously for dealing with whatever has been thrown at them in the past year.

As you can imagine it has been a very difficult year for our Captains John Finnigan, Ann White, and Brian Sapsed to go about their roles, but we thank them for their charity fundraising efforts and for representing the Club so well either on the golf course or in and around the clubhouse. Normally their term would cease at our **AGM**, but we are delighted to say that they will be carrying on in their roles in order to hopefully, have a proper go at being Captain and representing the club in the normal manner. Once again, we would like to say a huge thank you to John Bennett, Brian Sapsed, Di Little and Ian Comerford who volunteer a lot of their time to help run and organise the competitions and handicaps, amongst other things. We know that the transitions from the old handicap system to the new WHS was a very timely and arduous task and we thank them for making the transition smooth, seamless, and dealing with any teething problems quickly and efficiently.

Lastly, we would like to thank you, the members, for your continued support and kind words throughout what was the most difficult year in the golf club's history. We constantly hear positive feedback from visitors on the welcoming environment they experience when they visit Mount Pleasant. When you combine this with your support in the clubhouse and various other events in the past year, it means we are very proud, it gives us strong belief that we will get past these difficult times and that there are brighter days ahead, so once again a huge thank you from all the management.

### **A look back at 2020 from our Greenkeeping Team**

We would like to start by saying a big thank you for the donations to the greenkeepers Christmas box, we know how hard it has been this past year for everyone, but we really appreciate it.

For us 2020 started just like any normal year, cold frosty mornings took us through January and February and then it began to warm up in March just in time to allow us to hollow core the greens before the lockdown began. It was a huge shame that playing golf had to stop in March, but I can assure you, work on the course continued regardless.

The 50+ day closure gave us the chance to crack on with all the necessary jobs to maintain the course in anticipation for the reopening. We also had the new added extra of learning about and growing in the new greens and the late seeded areas, which did require a lot of watering and care due to the hot dry spell we endured. Time flew, and soon enough we reopened in May with COVID-19 restrictions in place, which included having to remove golf furniture, like rakes in bunkers, ball washers and applying ball lifters to the flags, but we soon got used to it and tried our best to keep the course in its best playable condition possible.

Although it was a remarkably busy month, we certainly enjoyed September starting off with the Club Championships, which was a few months later than usual with slightly different preparation but we were happy with the condition of the course and how it played for the weekend (we are sure Shane would agree.) We then went on to our GREENKEEPERS REVENGE, which for us was very entertaining and enjoyable, we're not sure however, you'd all agree!! We're sure we will be doing it again at some point in 2021 😊. The month finished off with the 18-hole test event which was a brilliant practice for us preparing for the opening of the 18-hole golf course.

With lots of work still to be done on the new course to get it ready for 2021, we finished off the year well, getting most of the bunkers completed with the eco turfed edges and finished with turfing, with the help of Craig, James, Taylor, Laurie & Tom. This is going to make the bunkers a lot more durable and hopefully even easier to escape from!

We are all extremely excited for 2021 and all the adventures the year will bring. We are looking forward to the opening of the new 18-hole Golf Course and we can't wait to see you back out there soon! - The Greenkeeping Team - Harry, Lee and Steve

### **A look back at 2020 from the Pro Shop**

2020 was, like for everyone, an exceedingly difficult year. New restrictions, long hours, selling coffee, tea, pasties, pies, greenkeeping, working, not working. You name it, we did it, but through all that we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, like we always do. There is such a wonderful mix of characters at the golf club and someone always comes along to put a smile on our face no matter how difficult the day has been. As always, we appreciate the support that you have shown us throughout 2020.

In terms of being a pro shop 2020, was quiet. I appreciate members concerns about stock levels in the shop at the moment, but given the current situation with COVID and restrictions placed on retail, I made a conscious effort to reduce spending to ease the financial burden on the club in these difficult times. Myself, Gavin and Tara have discussed the topic, and all agree that the issue will be addressed once we return to some sort of normality, whenever that may be.

Congratulations to Tom who earned his status on the EuroPro Tour in October for the coming year and, COVID permitting, we look forward to seeing him represent the club on this nationwide tour in the coming year.

I look forward to, hopefully, seeing you all soon in and around the club in the future but for the meantime, I wish all of you and your families a healthy, safe, and happy 2021 - Laurie, Tom and "young Tom".

### **Clubhouse team**

'Fancy working out the front for a bit' asked Tara

'Yes' said Trace

Little did I know I would be leading the team through the worst thing to hit hospitality trade in 'almost fifty years' of being in it!

It has been a rollercoaster ride of new rules, guidelines, & requirements and I have to say members and visitors have been respectful to the team and myself whilst we act like clubhouse police lol!

Looking back over the year we have had some well supported events, .... greenkeepers revenge, new course open day and the club champs, all of which made us feel like the clubhouse of old, but opening and locking three times does knock it out of you. I have to say thanks to the FOH and kitchen teams for the way they have handled this and continue to help support the club with the takeaways on Friday and Sundays.

Now we are in 2021 it's time to look forward to what will be a massive year in the club's history, not only have we got the new golf centre opening, but we also have the course opening to 18 holes which I know you're all looking forward to as much as we are.

Once we are out of this lockdown Marc is hoping to get the Chef's Table running again as it was so well supported by members, he is also chomping at the bit to get started on menus he has been working on.

Front of house are also looking forward to pushing our service levels higher, even though I am sure the rules and regulations will be there, and we are determined to continue to work hard to make visiting the clubhouse enjoyable.

In finishing can I wish all of you, a happy new year from the clubhouse teams and we cannot wait to welcome you back. - Trace - Aka 'Ommmmmmmm' (Operations Manager)

## Renewals

On to membership renewals, and you will be aware that annual subscriptions are due by 28<sup>th</sup> February. As mentioned, we appreciate that COVID has been difficult for everyone, and we fully understand that with the current lockdown set to be in place for a while yet, members have been unable to play for at least 17 weeks. With that in mind, we feel it is best to reduce the fees for the upcoming year in order to compensate, to some extent, for golf that has been lost in the previous year. Using Gold membership as an example the price will be as follows:

Members who joined prior to 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020 - **£795**

Members who joined on or after 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020 - **£895 (frozen at last year's price)**

The England Golf affiliation fees are due to be paid in addition to the subscriptions at a fee of £25.

We know that many golf clubs have taken the decision not to reflect any compensation for any golf that has been lost in 2020 with most having decided to just freeze their prices for the year ahead. We are fully expecting the new 18 holes to be open in May 2021 and have not, for this year, included an increase in membership fees for course expansion. For new memberships in 2021 the new Gold fee will be £945.

**For members to qualify for these compensation rates you must renew in your existing category before 28<sup>th</sup> February, after this date you will be classed as a new applicant and the new membership price for this year will apply. 2021 membership rates will also apply if you chose to amend your membership category. Any in year category changes will be subject to an administration fee.**

In preparation for us to still be able to open the 18-holes in May, we have invested heavily over the past year, some of which are detailed below:

Course investment in 2020

- Tractor & Mower - £60K
- Irrigation - £15K
- Bunkers - £15K
- Plus, other smaller projects and labour. We are truly fortunate to have Gavin, otherwise our labour cost would be significantly higher.

Approximately £100K in investment.

These are expenses that we could have chosen not to undertake under the financial circumstances, but we do not wish to put the opening of the new 18 holes off any later and therefore felt this investment was necessary.

Please remember, that being a proprietary club we are subject to VAT on memberships, while a lot of local clubs i.e. John O'Gaunt, Letchworth, Millbrook and South Beds are exempt.

**Please note, we will be reviewing green fee prices for when the 18 holes are open, and this should be taken into consideration should you wish to re-join.**

You can pay your subscription by several methods: (1) internet bank transfer, please use your name as the reference so we know you have paid. The bank details are, sort code 405162, account number 61605008; (2) Cheque, payable to Mount Pleasant Golf Club; (3) Debit/Credit card, in person or over the phone; (4) Cash. Should you wish to pay in person, Laurie and/or Tara will be in the clubhouse office every weekday morning between the hours of 9am and 12pm, from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> Feb - please remember your mask.

**Fees for those members who joined before 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020:**

Category	Subs (inc. VAT)	EG fees	Total Due
Gold	£795	£25	<b>£820</b>
Silver	£595	£25	<b>£620</b>
Bronze	£175	£25	<b>£200</b>
Joint Silver	£1035	£50	<b>£1085</b>
Joint Gold	£1390	£50	<b>£1440</b>

**Fees for those members who joined on or after 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020:**

Category	Subs (inc. VAT)	EG fees	Total Due
Gold	£895	£25	<b>£920</b>
Silver	£665	£25	<b>£690</b>
Bronze	£195	£25	<b>£220</b>
Joint Silver	£1165	£50	<b>£1215</b>
Joint Gold	£1560	£50	<b>£1610</b>

**Fees from 1<sup>st</sup> March or Membership Categories changes:**

Category	Subs (inc. VAT)	EG fees	Total Due
Gold	£945	£25	<b>£970</b>
Silver	£700	£25	<b>£725</b>
Bronze	£210	£25	<b>£235</b>
Joint Silver	£1230	£50	<b>£1280</b>
Joint Gold	£1650	£50	<b>£1700</b>

Looking further ahead we felt we should provide some clarity on membership prices for 2022-23, this gives everyone the opportunity to know where they stand in the year ahead.

1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 - 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023 membership fees will be:

- **Gold £995 (Joint Gold £1740)**
- **Silver £735 (Joint Silver £1295)**
- **Bronze £225**

Finally, once again, thank for all your continued support during this difficult year and we look forward to seeing you either on the golf course or in the clubhouse soon...hopefully!

Regards,

Gavin Simkins, Course Director

Tara Simkins, General Manager

John Finnigan, Virtual Golf Centre Director