



**Minutes of the 21st Annual General Meeting
held at the clubhouse on Sunday, 1 March 2015**

Present:	Jon Marsh	Club Captain	(JM)
	Peter Gillam	Co-opted Vice Captain	(PG)
	Frances Pryor	Ladies Captain	(FP)
	Laura Courage	Ladies Vice-Captain	(LC)
	David Harris	Treasurer	(DH)
	Peter Oliver	Handicap Secretary	(PO)
	Brian Orpin	Seniors Captain	(BO)
	Andrew Salter	General Manager	(AS)
	Matt Tyler	Professional & Juniors	(MT)
	Allan Tait	Incoming Course Manager	(AT)
	Karen Ross	Marketing	(KR)
	Francine Clout	Finance Manager	(FC)

22 other Members attended

JM opened the AGM and welcomed all attending.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The following formal apologies for absence were received from Martin Long, Brenda Gilbey, Tony Bryant, Bie Clinton & Jaime Hartle

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The members approved the minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 2 March 2014 which were signed by JM as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 2014 AGM

It was noted that AGM papers had been circulated electronically this year as a result of a suggestion by Simon Lees at the 2014 AGM. The Loyalty Card issue that had been raised would be dealt with in the Company Report.

4. RESOLUTION TO APPOINT VICE CAPTAIN

Peter Gillam was co-opted by the Committee as Vice Captain. A resolution confirming his appointment was tabled and passed unanimously by show of hands

5. COMPANY REPORT

AS introduced this section of reports by inviting Sweetwoods Park senior staff to present individual reports on their areas.

COURSE MANAGER'S REPORT

AT presented his report on the Course.

Firstly, as we approach the spring I would like to thank everyone for their support in my first year at the club. We have certainly achieved some big changes.

Notable achievements this year:

- Over 50% thatch reduction in the top 20mm of Greens surface. (Was 19% now at 7-8%, Target is 4% Organic Matter). This is possibly the most important fact of the year in terms of Green quality.
- Greens have drained far better due to the works that have taken place
- Intensive moss removal. Example is 13th which only has a few patches remaining
- 1st/7th and 14th Greens have had drains installed around them – Priority when I arrived was to improve the greens and areas surrounding them ASAP. Drains should intercept water from flowing on to the greens from higher areas.
- Bunkers improvements have been made to the 4th and 18th. The two bunkers on the 3rd are nearly completed. General quality of bunker presentation is better
- New path installed by the 4th tee
- Tree removal from the LHS of the 8th green. As discussed this will allow light to get to the surface and should improve it.
- Canopy adjustment to the trees surrounding the 17th Green. Again, increased light and air movement has already improved this green.
- All fairways, tees and approach areas have been aerated. This should improve root growth and aid drainage.
- Irrigation updates. The installation of improved sprinkler heads.

What's next?

- A continuation of the programme to improve the greens surfaces. Topdressing will continue to be regular but will not be as heavy as last year. Again, the aim is to do this at quieter times, this tends to be on Mondays. General cultural practices e.g aeration will continue as normal, at least monthly. More regular if possible in spring and autumn due to increased root growth potential of cool season grasses.
 - Irrigation updates – The updating of sprinkler heads and there positioning will be ongoing.
 - Continuing drainage improvements – i.e. 13th approach and 4th Approach areas
 - Continuing Pathway updates – Removal and replacement of Astroturf with a more suitable surface.
- Spring is nearly here and good golfing conditions will soon be upon us. I look forward to seeing you all on the course.

CLUB PROFESSIONAL & JUNIOR ORGANISER'S REPORT

MT presented his report.

Pro-Shop

- With all the changes to the pro-shop from this year, I'd like to thank all of the members for not only their encouraging words and kind gestures, but for their loyal support on purchases. It is very easy to just buy cheap online, and I appreciate being given the chance to provide you with the goods you require, even if I can't always beat the price.
- Thank you for your patience whilst training up my new staff and the transition of the hand-over through September/October. We are very close to slotting in the last piece to the jigsaw puzzle and I am proud to be managing that department who hopefully provide a great front of house to the company and club.

- The AW14 range had a lot of success through the club with the introduction of great brands like Under Armor and some popular garments provided by Green Lamb (for the ladies) and Oscar Jacobson (for the gents).
- The start of 2015 sees the new release of the 915 range from Titleist as well as then annual releases from Nike, in the form of the Vapor range, and TaylorMade with their Aero Burner and R15 models. Maybe a shock to the system is that Sweetwoods Park Golf Club no longer stock Callaway Golf. The reasoning behind this is purely business. In my opinion 2014 was a good hardware year for Callaway and the re-launch of the Big Bertha was a huge part of that, however, at Sweetwoods Park Callaway was the slowest selling manufacturer of our 5 headline brands. This doesn't mean we cannot get a hold of the products for those who really want them. A fortunate factor to being involved in the golf industry is that you create a lot of connections with other clubs and shops so if it's something we don't stock, there is still an option we can get it for you at a great price.
- What's coming for 2015/16? Great new lines from Under Armor for SS and AW. The Rory factor will blow through the pro-shop with Nike's new apparel and great merchandising. The designer from the huge European ladies brand "Golfino" now works for Green Lamb and the quality of their AW15 range looks outstanding (at no extra cost). We welcome Bridgestone to our golf ball family in replacement of Callaway and TaylorMade. Titleist and Bridgestone have the number 1 and number 2 market share worldwide in golf balls because they really are the best balls available. Bridgestone are running a golf ball fitting day for us in May which the members will receive free of charge and get some balls free to try. Lastly the introduction of a premium-clothing brand into the shop for AW15. I am not going to spoil the surprise just yet but it is something to be excited about for those who feel that the modern "techy" imagine isn't really them and they would like something a higher quality that looks great on and off the course.
- I am not a fan of the quote "price match". To me this indicates that we are already much more expensive than online and we have to lower our standards to keep up with them. What I have done moving forward is researched into prices around and online and valued our products accordingly. The new TaylorMade range I have priced up cheaper than online already, in the hope of showing you guys it is not just about maximize profit, but looking after you as loyal customers.

Swing Studio

- For those that have used the studio I hope you have all seen its potential. We can now extend our custom fits to the driving range as well for that player who wasn't to see their actual ball flight rather than a digital image of it.
- I am proud to say that we have a great conversion rate of those who choose to come and get custom fit in our studio. You will really see the difference in dispersion and distance when being fitted for the right shaft, the right model and the grip.
- Don't forget, we have demo gear available on all the brands that we stock so even if you don't choose to come to us for a fitting because you want it to be a lot less formal, please don't miss out on the opportunity to try the new products out on the golf course whether its with your husband, wife, son, daughter or just a friendly four ball.

Marshalls

- I think it is irrelevant to tell you how much we have spent on marshals over the last year because in my opinion every golf course needs a marshal in place to ensure the happenings of the day run smoothly when out of sight of the rest of the company.
- Throughout January and February 2015 we have had a marshal on sight for every day of the week. This is a huge step forward for us as a club because before we just didn't have a strong enough team of marshals in depth. If John or Tony were not available we couldn't

find cover. Now we have a team of 5 marshals that help to cover the different types of play throughout the week so please show them your respect because they aren't out there to give you a hard time, they are just trying to help you have a the best experience possible.

- To make sure everyone is clear; when the marshals are out on the golf course we have instructed them to complete a series of tasks. Check speed of play against volume of golfers. Confirm amount of players in each group and correct tee times. Ensure all golfers have signed into the pro-shop prior to playing. This is in the form of the score cards. When it comes to this, the marshal will firstly check for the golfers' bag tags. If these are not on show he will ask to see your validated scorecards or your booking receipt.

Optimus Team

- Mick Baldock and I will be running the Men's first team again this year. Anyone who is of a single handicap has been contacted and offered a position within the squad however they have been made aware that we will have to field our strongest 8 players for each match because on the whole we are a slightly higher handicapped squad in comparison to a lot of the other clubs for example: last year we played against Lewes GC who had a combined handicap of +8 between 8 players and we had a combined 33.
- March 14th see's us away to Willingdon GC in a friendly and then we will have internal practice sessions building towards the start of the tournament in April.

Driving Range

- For those that do know and those that don't, with the departure of Julian in October, the majority responsibility for the driving range has now moved to me. I have bought in 4,500 new 2-piece range balls and have got quotes for the general range improvement from the nets to the mats. This is a large outlay of money but we feel that it is an important facility to offer our members and for me to offer my clients. Our driving range will never be the best in the world because of its shape; size and landscape, however there are some definite improvements that can be made so that better quality practice sessions can be had by all.

Junior Section

- Disappointing junior year. Clinic up-take was down. We still ran the same amount of clinics as we have done in previous years but it just hasn't been as busy. Membership stats have dropped 45% in juniors. We still have not been in a position to run team matches and have struggled to run holiday competitions. The junior club championship didn't go ahead this year due to weather and then lack of uptake on re-scheduled date.
- Plans moving forward – we will continue to run a junior open event in august. We will continue to market the junior membership with a new strategy from previous years. Please remember that if you are an oak member, you can join your son/daughter up as a junior member FREE OF CHARGE. This doesn't mean they just get to play free whenever you like. They have to fill in the paperwork and become a member of the golf club and will be required to sign in on arrival like everyone else.

MARKETING REPORT

KR presented this report.

Sweetwoods Park Annual Members Survey

Back in August 2014; 145 of our members very kindly took the time and effort to complete an annual member's survey, thank you for your contributions to this. I'd like you to know that all of your feedback has been closely analysed and discussed at various management meetings since. We are currently pulling together an action plan to address the main comments that a majority of you made.

An apology if this appears to be taking a while. It can be time consuming to read and analyse all 145 of your comments across 10 questions, but it has also seen a slight delay due to my maternity leave. Please be assured that I am now giving this full focus and plan to share a written piece of communication with you all soon regarding our steps to address the majority of comments made.

Lots of new initiatives are planned for 2015:

Happy hour on the bar, every weekend during Feb and Mar, if it proves popular we may look to roll it out for the rest of the year, but time will tell. It is 2-4pm, buy 1 drink & get a 2nd half price, see the bar for details.

A new loyalty card for a partner, sibling, parent and or child will soon be launching for all members. This loyalty card enables 1 nominated member of your family to receive 10% off at the bar and in the restaurant. Please email Vicky Fearn in the office if you wish to apply for one.

New members drive

Sweetwoods is currently looking to drive membership due to the small number who are unable to renew each year; often due to illness, moving away or injury. As always we would far rather reward our existing members if they are to refer a member, than pay to place an ad in a magazine. So we are re-introducing our ever popular £250 reward for an Oak, £125 for a Beech, £75 for a Cadet over 30 or £50 for a Cadet under 30 and £50 for an Elm.

This fantastic offer will be available until the 31st May 2015. After this date, the reward scheme will change to a single, smaller rate across all membership categories, so please get in there this spring to ensure your best possible reward for introducing a new member.

Members versus visitors

Every year I review the membership categories to ensure they remain attractive for golfers and are packed full of great benefits. Ideas in the past have included complimentary lockers, complimentary guest passes, extended booking times, affinity partners and the ability to save money on the cost to renew if members are interested in working with our financial advising partner St. James's Place. I am extremely interested to hear suggestions from the members when it comes to benefit ideas and I am looking to the members for support to ensure the initiatives we put in place are well supported. Please email me with any membership benefit requests you may have before the end of March 2015, so they can be considered for the next renewal period.

MAIN COMPANY REPORT

AS presented his report which is set out below.

No decision has yet been taken on what increases will be applied to the main categories of membership but any increase that might be applied is likely to be nominal.

Membership has been another challenge throughout 2014 with membership attrition on renewal being around 15.42% .Industry average is 15%. This was despite holding fees for the third year in succession.

The main reasons for the drop in membership has been down to suspending members who have not kept up with their payments, members who have moved away and sadly those who have passed away. Our thoughts go out to Dave Wells, Val Bates and Trevor Peckham's families. To date we have recruited 43 new members for the current year with incentives in place to increase membership numbers throughout 2015. Karen will explain this at the AGM.

The golf network continues to be popular as more of our members join up to play alternative courses within the area free of charge and our affinity partner Cranwell Wealth Management continues to help members as well as supporting events we have had at the Club i.e. Seniors Mixed Pairs Open.

At this time last year Allan Tait was employed as Course manager and had an uphill battle in terms of bringing the course back into a good position after a very disappointing winter. I am sure everyone is delighted with the transformation and has seen the extensive maintenance work that has been taking place.

The Autumn/winter work that has been and is being carried out will ensure we have a much improved course moving into the spring and summer periods. The fact that we have only being closed for 4 days this winter with other courses in the area closing more often has confirmed this. This is a credit to Allan and his green keeping team.

Course maintenance communication has also improved with Allan's monthly course updates placed on both the main Club notice board and in the Pro shop. The close liaison with Peter Oliver has also channelled areas of concern from members so that appropriate action can be taken where appropriate. This I feel has worked far better than the archaic greens committee meetings in the past.

Management of societies have improved with Marshal's being employed almost every day last year to control speed of play and ensure etiquette is observed on the course at all times. Examples of slow play with both members and societies have been evident so Matt is working closely with our Marshal's to prevent this from happening in 2015.

The current membership year saw the requirement for all members to check in to the Pro shop when playing both social and competitive golf as the old system was being abused. It has also allowed us to measure accurate member usage on the course and improve our commitment to member health and safety.

Last year saw the departure of Julian and Tracey and the introduction of Vicky in the office and the promotion of Matt Tyler to Club Professional. Both have already made a positive contribution to the club.

Member function activity continues to grow with both social, anniversary and birthday celebrations being a key part of this business. The Carvery has also grown throughout last year again being well supported by members.

In the Clubhouse Steve Adams was promoted to Clubhouse and Events Manager and has improved standards of service building a good relationship with our members.

After an inconsistent year of food preparation due to the turnover of Head Chef's and a disappointing Hygiene inspection, Dave has been recruited as Head Chef to focus on delivering added value comfort food dishes linked to drinks packages. This has already had a positive response with our members.

Sarah and Charlotte have now been employed on part time contracts to encourage stability within the Clubhouse team. With Steve on a full time contract this should have a positive effect on staff turnover.

Wine prices are also being looked at to ensure we are competitive with other Golf Clubs without compromising the quality of our current offering.

Financially year to date we are moving in the right direction with good forecasted business on the books for 2015.

As promised last year we will be looking at Loyalty card spend this year and will be rewarding the top five members who have spent in the Clubhouse during this current membership year. This will go back onto their loyalty cards.

On a personal note I would like to thank Jon and Fran as outgoing Captains and Brian Orpin as outgoing Seniors Captain for all their hard work throughout 2014. (At this stage AS presented JM, FP & BO with a gift as a gesture of appreciation from the company.) I would also like to thank the main Club Committee for all of their hard work and support last year which I feel is often not fully appreciated and recognised.

6. CLUB CAPTAIN'S REPORT

JM presented a summary of his report, the full contents of which are set out below:

It has been an honour and a privilege to be the Club Captain of Sweetwoods in its 20th anniversary year. That said, it's not been an easy year.

The passing of Vice Captain, Dave Wells, was a massive blow to us all 2 days into our year and was very difficult to come to terms with.

Appointing Dave's successor (after an appropriate period) proved a real challenge. Initially, Roger Gualtieri took on the role. Unfortunately, due to family commitments and a change in circumstances, Roger could not complete the task. Thankfully, Pete Gillam agreed to become Vice Captain in September. I'm sure Pete would agree that taking over as competitions secretary in particular has been a really steep learning curve!

At the start of my year, the Club was also between head green keepers and, although Allan Tait had agreed to take over, the course was not in the best condition. I'm glad to report, and I hope you will all agree, that with Allan's leadership and expertise, the green keepers have made massive improvements especially with the greens. While there is still a long way to go, I can tell you that, speaking with Allan, he has a clear plan for what needs to be done. Peter Oliver is the Committee's liaison with Allan and between them, I feel the best interests of the members will be served with the course going forwards. Sure, there will always be issues. But I feel huge steps have been made.

When Fran and I became the Captains, we set out to ensure that we would balance the books (with David's help of course), and I am pleased to say this has been achieved.

With Peter Oliver's help, we have looked at a competition online booking and payment system which, while being available, is still being debated at Committee. The cost at this time may prove prohibitive. We do now use a computerised system for drawing the completions within our Club's style.

As Captain, I have had the pleasure of playing in numerous men's' inter-club matches which I have really enjoyed. There are many friendly matches which I would recommend to any member who likes the team format as a perfect introduction. These are open to all members with a current handicap. Those who play in the friendlies are then selected for the Suskens winter league team.

For the first time this year, Sweetwoods played in the Invicta league which was great fun and highly competitive. I was even fortunate enough to be selected for some of the ties by Mr Tooke!

The EGT, Optimus and Cyril Blake teams played in the County knock-out competitions, and it has been with some pride that I have supported the teams in matches; our players being focused by their respective captains. This year I would like to make a special mention of the Cyril Blake team who got to the Gilbert Print Plate semi finals. Well done to David Harris and all his troops.

The Captains Cup weekend is for me one of the highlights of the calendar, and this year didn't disappoint. There was loads of banter and great fun with Mr Gillam's team 'Pete's Ponies' being narrowly edged out by the Captains team 'Marshes Marvels.' Great sport for all.

This year saw the 20th anniversary of Sweetwoods and it was celebrated in fine style with the Anniversary Cup competition and with a super band playing in the club house afterwards. It was great to see so many past captains playing in the event. It was particularly apt that the sadly departed Val Bates was part of the winning team. I'm glad to say that the Anniversary Cup is being held again this year.

Our summer Masquerade ball this year was, in my opinion, fantastic. We were entertained by an exceptional band, the food was good and a great time was had by all.

The presentation night went well with a disco until 1.00am (as promised). We went for a comparatively simple menu (at a very reasonable price) which in general was enjoyed.

I would like to thank the following members for their help:

Tony Clark for his trophy engraving and giving.

Jan Hook for organising the honours boards (amongst other things.)

Philip Hook for producing the presentation charts and tables for both the Captains' Charity Day and the Captains Cup. They help make these events so special.

Men's Team captains: EGT - John Young. Optimus - Mick Baldock and Matt Tyler.
Cyril Blake - David Harris. Invicta league - Tony Tooke.

To Redmond Lee, Lindsey Pring and Tony Tooke for their help with the knockouts.

An extra special thank you to:

Micky Sandall for auditing the club accounts for the sum total of a bottle of whisky!

Steve Kent taking minutes of Committee Meetings.

Pam Johnston. Pam has done so much behind the scenes work and has helped both Pete and myself with numerous tasks.

Andrew Salter and his teams in the office, bar and kitchen for all their efforts.

Allan Tait and the green keeping staff.

Matt Tyler and Julian Reason for their help and expertise in the pro shop and beyond.

Further thanks to the Committee for their support. The members of the Committee give up so much time for the Club's common good and generally are sadly unappreciated.

Peter Oliver whose efforts are invaluable to the Club.

David Harris for his role as treasurer and for keeping us all honest!

Brian Orpin for his sage advice and linking to the Senior section.

Pete Gillam for stepping in probably earlier than he wanted to in our time of need. I hope you are a great captain!

Laura Courage for her help in organising the committee meetings and her various jobs for the ladies section. Enjoy your year as Lady Captain!

Last but not least, my Lady Captain, Frances Pryor. I couldn't have asked for anyone better to work with. Meticulous, funny, insightful and, most important of all, 'my friend'.

7. LADY CAPTAIN'S REPORT

FP presented a summary of her report, the full contents of which are set out below:

The Ladies' section at Sweetwoods continued to thrive during 2014.

In terms of numbers, as at 31st December 2014, we were 78 ladies, including 3 juniors. This was close on a 10% increase during the year. At the year end, 68 ladies held current competition handicaps, and our average handicap was 24.9 against a ladies' national average of 25.3. What is particularly good news is that, unlike many ladies sections at golf clubs in the region, we grew in size and strength during the year.

We were also a very active section during 2014. Maybe that's where the appeal lies, at least in part, for ladies to join and play at Sweetwoods.

We participated in the following National events: Mail on Sunday, Daily Mail Foursomes, and Ping; and supported the LGU Breakthrough Brooch charity and all things England Golf. From a County perspective, we entered teams into all 3 divisions, played in the Scratch Foursomes and Singles, Morrice Foursomes and several other cup competitions. No trophies this year but we were competitive in all.

Inter-club, we played 6 weekday friendlies (won 5, drew 1), 3 weekend friendlies (won 2, drew 1) and 4 mixed friendlies (some more so than others! won 2, lost 2.) These are results which make good reading.

The ladies also participated fully in all Club events: weekend and midweek competitions and the summer and winter knockouts. Another appeal for ladies, of playing golf at Sweetwoods, is that our competitions are run on a mixed basis. We very much enjoy competing with/against the men. And in this context, I'm particularly pleased to note that we retained both the Margaret Parsons and Senior Men v Ladies trophies in 2014!

Within the Ladies' section itself, we also successfully ran, and played in, the following competitive/social events: a Ladies' Invitation Day, the Hutchinson Hack, 2 Exchange Days (Redlibbets and Mid-Sussex), 3 Fun Days, Tuesday Roll-Ups (so popular that we have increased our tee times for 2015), and Winter and Summer Eclectics. Not forgetting what was probably the most fun weekend of our year: The Ladies Captains' Cup.

None of this would have been possible without the support of many helpers. My thanks go to all of the ladies who have given their time and assistance during 2014. In particular, to my Committee: Laura Courage, Aileen Oliver, Maureen Sinclair, Siriol Powney and (for the sadly short time she was a part of the Committee before her husband became ill) Julia Bradbury. My thanks also to Sue Hay who was the ladies' representative on the seniors' committee. I need make no comment separately on the ladies who play(ed) main club/seniors golf. Because we are, quite simply, one integrated section.

Julia Bradbury was not the only loss to the Ladies' section during 2014. This is something on which I commented at the recent Ladies' Annual Dinner. Suffice to note in this report the sudden and sad passing of Val Bates. An additional award, in memory of Val, was introduced into the Hutchinson Hack for 2014 and going forwards.

On a similar note, the passing of Dave Wells only a few days after his election as Club Vice Captain was a great loss to all.

Some final, personal, thanks for their help and support during the year: to Andrew and his staff, the Main Club Committee as a whole, and the members of Sweetwoods. The latter additionally for raising over £6,000 for Kent Young Carers, the Captains' Charity for 2014.

Separate mention to Jon, who's been fantastic to work with as Club Captain. And to Laura, who's been a wonderful Vice Captain. Thank you both for your hard work, support and friendship.

My best wishes to the incoming Captains and Committee. With Laura at the helm, I know the Ladies' section at Sweetwoods will continue to thrive in 2015!

8. VICE CAPTAIN / COMPETITION SECRETARY'S REPORT

PG presented his report:

Having only taken over this position in September, 2014 I am only able to report on events since that date.

I would like to record my grateful thanks to Pam Johnston for her invaluable help in guiding me through the procedures involved in organising competitions.

I am also indebted to my Match Team Organisers, Jon Marsh, David Harris, Mike Baldock, John Young, Tony Tooke and Matt Tyler for their work in overseeing the various club matches.

This leads me to the knockout competitions that have been well organised and well run by Redmond Lee, Lindsey Pring and Tony Tooke.

I am pleased to report that Lindsey and Tony have agreed to continue in these roles throughout the forthcoming year.

Peter Oliver has worked extremely hard in setting up the Master Scoreboard program that enables competitions to be run electronically from start to finish. This new way of running competitions is obviously the way forward to minimise the workload of the person that is running the various competitions. Peter has kindly offered to share his expertise by training members to use this system in the next few weeks.

The competition secretary's role would be so much more difficult to fulfill without a team of other members' support. Thankfully, there have been many members who have been willing to support me, when I took over the position at short notice. I am indebted to Jon Marsh for his advice and support in all matters.

The competitions that I have organised over the last few months have all been well attended and enjoyed by all those who have participated in them.

Losing the Captain's Cup to Jon and his team was a disappointment but no doubt my team will succeed this year!!

The winter months have been kind to members with only a few competitions having to be re-arranged. Hopefully this will continue for the remainder of the winter.

9. SENIOR CAPTAIN'S REPORT

BO presented the following report:

Firstly may I say how much I have enjoyed this last year, especially working with the Seniors Committee, and Jon and his Main Club Committee. It is not until you get involved that you fully appreciate how hard your representatives work on your behalf.

The Seniors' section membership has increased to 130 during the year and the numerous events, competitions, fun days and social events have been very well supported. Sadly this year we lost two of our past captains, Trevor Peckham 1995 and 1996, and Dave Wells 2012. An annual Dave Wells Memorial Cup competition was inaugurated, and a special presentation was made to Trevor shortly before he died.

The Seniors alternate weekly, qualifiers and fun days at our Thursday meetings. One problem that we often encounter with our Thursday roll up is delayed start times, due usually to popularity and high attendance, so we are trialling a new computerised booking system, specifically designed for the Seniors, which we hope will address the problem.

We have introduced the new CONGU club handicap calculations in advance of the 2016 implementation date although only four of our Senior members are affected.

As with the Main Club we value the fact that ladies and men are fully integrated, an attribute that many members of the other clubs we come into contact with, view with envy.

29 matches were played this season, of which 5 were abandoned due to adverse weather, with 2 being rearranged. Of the 26 played there were 7 wins, 3 halved and 16 lost, albeit many very narrow margins. Compliments to the Main Club Ladies who did not need our over gallant approach to register a whitewash. Results, however do not tell the whole story, namely the great fun we had meeting new friends and renewing old acquaintances. Those that do not take the opportunity to play in interclub matches miss much of what Sweetwoods club membership offers.

Our thanks to Peter Luckhurst, who has not only managed our fixture list superbly, but has also refreshed it with the introduction of new clubs such as East Sussex National, and Lamberhurst. It is interesting to note how many other clubs say Sweetwoods is one match for which they are often oversubscribed with players.

The Seniors Mixed Open, attracted 96 players from other clubs in the South East and was deemed a huge success with many visitors already signed up for the coming year.

The Seniors Accounts have been audited and published showing a cumulative surplus of £4020.

My charity, the National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society, has benefitted by £3,135 raised by various golfing and social events, and great credit goes to all those who organised, participated or simply donated. This donation will enable the local NRAS group that serves our area to continue their good work for many years.

Thanks to all those who have made this past year so enjoyable, my own Seniors' Committee, who have been quite brilliant, Andrew and his staff for looking after us, Allan and the green keeping staff for getting our course back in shape, and to all those members who perhaps I otherwise would never have had the opportunity to get to know.

The new Seniors' Captain is Alastair Bolingbroke, his Vice John Gatland, and I wish them, and Peter, Laura and their committee, every success in the coming year

There followed a 10 minute break in the AGM (?)

10. TREASURER'S REPORT

DH presented a summary of his report and , the full contents of which are set out below:

The twelve months ending last December provided some challenges for the committee, not least of which was the loss of several competitions during the early part of the year to poor weather conditions and further cancellations throughout the season. As I explained in my report last year, competition income is the only source of money to the committee that enables it to function fully. Whilst a large percentage of our income goes towards prize money, cup engraving and honours boards, (rewarding the successful among you), other funds are required to organise and run club competitions and matches.

There is also income from charity events run by the committee giving a positive reflection of this club and its members, both to the wider golfing fraternity and to the world at large. With this in mind, may I offer my congratulations to your Captains Jon and Fran for all the work they have done in raising over £6000 for this year's charity "Kent Young Carers" . This is shown as a provision in the accounts of £6051, to which must be added at least £160 which has been collected since the start of 2015.

My main task has been to handle the moneys raised by way of competition income. Importantly, we, as a committee, have a duty to ensure that the money raised by club members is spent wisely, and always for the benefit of the club members. We therefore made

You may remember that we raised the general competition entry fee to £4 for all competitions starting after May 1st 2014. This has ensured that, despite the loss of competitions during the year, our income matched that of 2013. This extra income from increased competition fees a promise to ourselves that we run a "budget neutral" set of accounts; i.e. that we would not incur any expenditure that was not covered by income. You will see that we have achieved this in two ways. Firstly the outstanding £674 unexplained loss was recovered from my predecessor and has, as

promised, been added back to the accounts as a recovery. Secondly, we have lived within our means, more of which later in my report.

Income

You may remember that we raised the general competition entry fee to £4 for all competitions starting after May 1st 2014. This has ensured that, despite the loss of competitions during the year, our income matched that of 2013. This extra income from increased competition fees amounted to £842 for the year. (The Major competitions already had an entry fee of £4).

Expenditure

Capital expenditure over the last twelve months has been greatly reduced. The committee has not found it necessary to spend so much on Honours Boards and Trophies partly because the walls and trophy cabinets are just about full. Our representative teams in County competitions, with one exception (which I am too modest to mention), did not progress as far as in other seasons, and their costs to the club were therefore less. Other potential budgeted figures, such as payments as a result of Holes in One, were significantly lower as well.

Balance Sheet

The committee balance sheet is now in a much healthier position, with net assets of £5427. Losses in the three previous years of £1571 (2011), £1784 (2012), and an adjusted figure of £1313 (see note 1. to the accounts) in 2013 were clearly not sustainable. I do not necessarily advocate that we return the accounts to a position we were in four years ago when we had assets of nearly £10000; but, as I stated earlier, we must live within our means.

There will always be unexpected events during the next year that will necessitate some small capital expenditure; and the costs incurred in running competitions and the updating of honours boards for instance, will always be increasing. When the new Captains are elected, we will draw up a budget for the year that aims to balance the books again with possibly a little extra put aside to provide for any significant unforeseen expenses that may occur in future years.

Finally, two thank yous; may I firstly thank members of the committee for their support during the year. Secondly, I should also like to thank Micky Sandall for auditing the annual accounts. Twelve months ago, Micky was considering moving away from the Sweetwoods area, but thankfully he is still here and has been very helpful and supportive to me in the preparation and presentation of the club accounts.

11. HANDICAP SECRETARY'S REPORT

PO summarised his report, the full contents of which are set out below:

80% of members, excluding juniors, have handicaps, with 10% being Non Competition. In terms of playing handicaps, 15% are 12 and below, with 45% in the 13 to 20 range.

There were 27 First Awards during the year plus 10 handicaps transferred from other Clubs for joining members.

There were 10 General Play revisions including 5 Seniors Male members who have been granted handicaps in excess of 28 under a provisional CONGU rule authorised by England Golf.

There were 6 Exceptional Scoring Reductions.

Supplementary Cards were again well used.

24 handicap revisions were made by the Handicap Committee at the Annual Review of all handicaps, 13 reductions and 11 increases. The analysis of competitive play confirmed a very stable position, average handicaps remaining at 25 for the Ladies and 15 for the Men playing in Main Club competitions.

The best scores returned in the Main Club competitions were:

Best Gross	71	Gavin Myles
Best Net	65	Pete Vizard
Stableford	45pts	Anne Burton-Gow

And in Seniors' competitions:

Best Gross	77	John Gatland
Best Net	66	Nick Simpson
Stableford	51pts	Hubert Rabas

12. FORMAL QUESTIONS RAISED BY MEMBERS

Tony Bryant's Question

I have noted on the Sweetwoods Website (26/01/2015) it is offering "Permanent Lower Prices for Visitor Green Fees." In essence it is reducing green fees by £5 to visitors. The weekend green fee is £30 and the weekday green fee is £25 at present. Therefore Visitor green fees have been offered at a reduction of 16% for Weekends, and 20% for weekdays. Being an Oak member I trust I can see a similar reduction in my annual membership Fees.

Answer

Yes visitors are incentivised to book on line with a £5.00 reduction off green fee prices. The reason for this is

- We are guaranteed payment up front eliminating the chance of cancellation
- The Pro shop and office teams do not need to taking bookings over the phone so can spend more time with our members
- This incentive allows us to supplement our visitor data base so that we can capture future membership.

As an Oak member you have many advantages over a visitor

- You can play 7 days a week, if you choose to, reducing your green fee to a much lower rate than a visitor will pay per round.
- You have a loyalty card which gives you 10% off all food and beverage in the Clubhouse
- You can have a complimentary locker for a year on renewal. A visitor has to pay.
- You have the ability to play 35 courses free of charge as part of the Golf Network group
- You can join your children as a Junior member free of charge as an Oak member
- You can book tee times 14 days in advance where visitors are restricted to a 7 day lead in time.

The added value attached to Oak membership is far greater than that of a visitor so hopefully that answers the question.

Philip Hook's Questions

Q1

The questionnaire on the club championship was intended to gain an insight from those who have played in weekend competition, of the 150 regular competitive players asked answers were received back from 74 members by the closing date of 30th of January and have been passed on to Pete and Laura for discussion by the incoming committee before a decision is made for this year's format.

Philip answered 1 question on the questionnaire which was the question to express a preference for a 1 or 2 day Competition. What I can tell you at this stage is that a large majority prefer a 2 day event. Less than a third want a 1 day comp.

The last 2 years Championships have been held over 2 days after participating entries fell to 64 in the 1 day event in 2012. The 2 day event was decided upon after research during John Young's captaincy which he will be happy to discuss with any members who want more information.

Participants in 2013 were 75 and in 2014 were 79. This is at a time when the 7 day membership has fallen by approximately 25% from 2008-2012 levels and entrants to the Championship are mainly from this category. The questionnaire was never intended to be a definitive document but a tool to gauge a feel for the competition.

Q2.

During the past 2 years and I believe on many other occasions during numerous other captaincies, discussions have taken place to add this post or that post to committee but up to this point the structure has not been formally altered.

During the last 2 years this has subject arisen on 3 occasions and the committee decided against pursuing this course of action in favour of the use of informal sub committees or individual helpers to manage specific tasks.

There are currently approaching 40 members involved in helping run golfing activities across all sections the majority of which are not committee roles and as such remain in place over an indefinite period thus providing a degree of continuity.

As an example the club vice-captain is responsible for main club competitions and there are currently 6 members reporting to this position. It may well be that with the addition of further computer technology that a main club competition organiser will be required to be added to this group.

Also the club constitution allows for a further 2 members to be co-opted to the committee if it's deemed necessary.

As the general committee has a responsibility to all members I would hope that should any new position be created it would have a club wide responsibility.

13. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following elections to Committee posts took place.

Post	Name	Proposer	Secunder
Captain	Peter Gillam	[Automatic under the Constitution]	
Lady Captain	Laura Courage	[Automatic under the Constitution]	

Club Vice Captain Redmond Lee [Automatic under the Constitution]

Handicap Secretary Peter Oliver [Automatic under the Constitution]

JM presented PG with his Club Captain's jacket.

15. ADDRESS BY THE INCOMING CLUB CAPTAIN

First of all a big thank you to all of you, not just for your support tonight but for all those of you who have wished me good luck for the coming year - there have been many of you who have done that.

Some have asked if I'm looking forward to my captain's year to which I have replied very much so.

Others have asked if I'm daunted by it, well when I look round the room tonight, all I see is friends so how can I be daunted.

I would like to say a huge thanks to Jon for asking me to be his vice and for his help, guidance, and support over the last few months. Also many thanks to the committee members who have guided and encouraged me since taking on the vice - captain's role.

There have also been a numbers of members who have run teams Dave Harris, Tony Tooke, John Young, Jon Marsh, Mike Baldock, & Matt Tyler. It would be impossible for one person to organise so many competitions and I am really grateful for the support that they have given in this way.

I have already approached other members including Philip & Jan Hook to help with a number of issues and they have said that they are more than willing to give of their time in the forthcoming year.

It is an honour and a privilege to be asked to be the Club Captain of Sweetwood's Golf Club. I will certainly do my utmost to do justice to the role.

I am a firm believer in communication with all members and in doing so I am certain that we will have a very successful year. Both Laura and myself will give total commitment to the membership - it will without doubt be a year when everyone's opinions are valued.

Our chosen charity for the year is St Catherine's Hospice. Please try and help and support fundraising events whenever you can.

I will not go on too much this evening, however I would just like to finish by thanking Jon & Fran who have had an excellent year despite the tragic start that they had to their captaincy year.

16. The final 200 Club draw took place.

FORMAL MEETING CLOSED 19: 20 (?)

.....CLUB CAPTAIN /...../.....