

MINUTES OF THE FIFTY FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF THE SOCIETY OF KENT GOLF CAPTAINS:

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15th MAY 2024 AT WEST KENT GOLF CLUB,

DOWNE, KENT.

After our lunch, the Captain David Skinner called for a few moments of silence after announcing members of The Society who had passed away to reflect in their memory.

Following lunch, the Captain of West Kent Golf Club, Mr. Karl Blackburn welcomed the Society to his home club. He went on to say that he wished the incoming Captain and members of the Society a successful golfing year.

Our Captain David Skinner responded and thanked West Kent GC for allowing us to hold our AGM at the home of the Society and asked the West Kent Captain to pass on our thanks to all those concerned.

The captain then announced the opening of the AGM.

Item 1) The Secretary read the notice convening the Fifty Fifth AGM.

Item 2) Apologies for Absence: Mr. Chairman, apologies have been received from: Peter Hyland.

Item 3) The Minutes of the Fifty Fourth Annual General Meeting on the 17th May 2023 were approved unanimously and duly signed.

Matters Arising:

None were forthcoming.

Item 4) **Treasurer's Report:**

In presenting the accounts for the year ended 31st December I have to report that the Society made a loss of £7,574. Several factors contributed to this but there were two main ones. The first was the refurbishment of the Chains of office which had, as far as I am aware, never been done in the lifetime of the Society and this totalled just over £2600. The second major factor was a substantial loss of the meeting at Littlestone. An agreed fixed sum had been agreed with the Club and unfortunately not enough members opted to support this meeting and the overall loss was nearly £2000. We will not be entering into this sort of arrangement again!

However, on the positive side I am pleased to report the administrative costs of the Society (excluding the Chains of Office) remained similar to the previous year.

It is clear that the Society cannot continue making loss as it has done over the last couple of years and your committee has put in place steps to rectify this. The first is that subscriptions and joining fee rates have been increased for all new joining members to £30 and £20, respectively. This will take time for the results to filter through but is a positive move. Secondly we have looked at the various expenses incurred at meetings such as the ball sweep (which will continue), gratuities etc and taken steps to make sure that the entry fee covers this costs and at the same time we will be reducing them in order to try and keep entry fees to a reasonable level. The Committee has been and will continue to look at other ways of reducing costs of Meetings and Matches but at the same time ensuring that the membership have enjoyable days out.

I am sure that most Members are aware that Golf Clubs, because of increased membership, no longer rely as heavily on Society income and it is therefore more difficult, first to find Clubs that are prepared to take us for a full day, and secondly agreeing a reasonable rate for the day. No longer do Golf Clubs feel privileged to have our Society for the day!!

Finally, I must express my thanks to Mike Stephens and the Committee for all their help in assisting me through my first year.

Item 5) **Chairman's Report:**

The captain in a resume of his year said how much he had enjoyed his year. He went on to thank each and every one for their help, support, and encouragement during the past year. His gratitude went to the members of the committee and those members retiring this year for their effort and work this year. He reflected on the playing events of the year, County matches, Queens Diamond Jubilee Trophy and Queens Silver Jubilee Trophy, and gave thanks to the match managers. He thanked the Secretary for his support and guidance throughout the year, making sure he was where he was supposed to be when he was supposed to be. He also thanked the President Lynn Mercer for the friendship and support in the past two years.

Item 6) **Secretary's Report:**

Introduction

2023 was a difficult year for me, my choice of venues for holding members meetings became more limited. The Covid effect meant that golf clubs, popular to our members, were full and had waiting lists which created pressure on GM's when we were effectively wanting to close their course for a good part of a day. This coupled with the cost-of-living crisis and rising utility bills created a perfect storm for the Society. Where once we were welcomed, we were now effectively priced out with green fee/catering close to £100 per person and in some cases considerably more. To keep costs down we had to limit the 27-

hole events to just one club, Rochester and Cobham Park who were sympathetic to our cause. Where we were able to reach agreement on price, we still saw an increase to members of 25% +. This is not to say that all clubs were out of our reach, and I thank these clubs for their generosity of spirit. Home clubs of our Captain & President amongst others collaborated with us to keep the entry price affordable to members.

Membership

We started 2023 with membership in the region of 505 and finished the year with 517, we had 27 new members. However, this was offset by resignations and the sad passing of a number of our members.

Committee

I would like to thank our committee for their tireless work during 2023. I want to thank the committee members that left having given of their time and valuable service, Nigel Digweed (Ashford), & Graham Hudson (Dartford).

I hope their replacements Brian Gallaher (Sene Valley), Adrian Foster (Bearsted), & David Peach (Langley Park) have enjoyed their first year.

County Matches

Under the leadership of our illustrious Captain, we managed to improve on the last two years tally. With the Essex match still to be played, at the time of drafting this report, the record stands at Won 3 lost 2 & drawn. I cannot stress enough that these matches are friendlies played in the same spirit. Participation is open to any Society member irrespective of handicap. If you have not already done so, please take the plunge. We get to play at marvellous golf clubs who host us with a lunch, 18 holes of golf culminating with a sumptuous evening meal. If you would like to play in one of these friendly matches or want to learn more please contact one of our match managers, details to be found on our website [Officers \(kentgolfcaptains.org\)](http://Officers(kentgolfcaptains.org))

Queens Diamond Jubilee Triangular Match

The 2023 Queens Diamond Jubilee Triangular Match played between Kent, London and Sussex consisting of teams drawn from Committee members and Past Captains was hosted by Sussex at Seaford GC. Unfortunately, Kent were runners up again to Sussex. We hope to get back to winning ways this year when we host the competition at Royal Blackheath GC.

Queens Silver Jubilee Competition

The 7 County Queens Silver Jubilee Trophy was hosted in 2023 by Oxfordshire at a rain swept Tadmarton Heath GC who were the eventual winners with the remainder of the field separated by a handful of points. This year's match is being hosted by London and will be played at Sudbury GC in August and hopefully the team can bring the trophy back to Kent.

Kent Lady Captains v Kent Captains

The Annual Match with the Society of Lady Captains of Kent Golf Clubs was played at our spiritual home at West Kent Golf Club. This ever-popular fixture attracted two teams of 24 made up in equal parts of a man and a lady in teams titled, 'The Ladies' Team' and the 'Men's Team'. This year the Ladies' Team out came out winners. I would like to extend a big thank you to Roger Cruttenden who managed this event. This year's event will be held at West Kent GC so if you would like to take part in this fun event either contact Roger or the Secretary.

Members Meetings

Our members summer meetings at Langley Park GC, Littlestone GC (blowing a hurricane), & Sittingbourne GC proved quite popular. However, the spectre of the cost of living and increases in utility bills caused members to be more selective in where they played.

The Pro/Guest Day played at our Captains home club of West Kent saw 26 teams from across the County compete in this popular event. The eventual winners were a team from my home club Eltham Warren captained by the late Roger Hills.

Rochester & Cobham Park GC made a tremendous effort to enable us to be able stage Christmas Fayre despite torrential rain the night before until early morning the fixture went ahead. Considering the amount of rain the course played very well; however, the rain sodden ground made the course play longer. The greens were fast and tricky to read. We were treated to a delicious three course traditional Christmas Dinner followed by coffee.

Reports of for all these events are available on our website [Meetings \(kentgolfcaptains.org\)](https://kentgolfcaptains.org)

Annual Dinner

Our annual dinner hosted by The Weald of Kent was a tremendous success with our host out doing themselves with the quality of the food and service that helped to create a relaxed atmosphere that added to the enjoyment. Our Captain, David Skinner and Vice-Captain Mike Stephens held the audience with speeches but were upstaged by our guest speaker Ian Irvine with his irreverent response. I must thank Robert Dicketts, a past president from Lamberhurst for acting as MC and ensuring that things ran smoothly and to time.

2024 Overseas Spring Tour

At the time of drafting this report I am only days away from flying out to our Overseas Spring Tour. This year we will be heading for the Gloria Serenity Resort at Belek in Turkey. A full report and photos will be available on our website.

[News \(kentgolfcaptains.org\)](https://kentgolfcaptains.org)

Charity Fund

Our Charity fund raised over £2.7k in 2023 I would like to thank all members who kindly contributed to our fund. I would like to thank William Albery for all his efforts this year.

In Closing

I would like to thank Mike Odd & Pat Quadling for their help and company on the reception desk at our members meetings.

I would like to thank our committee for their support this year. A big thank you to our stand in Treasurer Robert Dicketts for his excellent work to the Society this year, and Terry Ralph for his continued work managing our website and supporting me.

Finally, a massive thank you to you our members who have wished me well and who have given support to the Society.

Here is looking forward to the 2024 Golf season.

Item 7) **The Election of Officers:**

The following officers were approved by the Meeting:

Mr. D. Skinner	President
Mr. M. Stephens	Captain
Mr B. Smith	Vice-Captain
Mr. P. Morris	Secretary
Mr. R. Dicketts	Treasurer
Mr. P. Oldfield	Examiner

The Secretary then called upon the outgoing president Lynn Mercer to begin the process of installing the society's officers for 2024/25.

The outgoing President Lynn Mercer presents the President's Chain of Office to our new President David Skinner. In handing over the Chain of Office the outgoing President said these words:

I have come to know David well over the past two years – plenty of time to think of kind things to say about him, as I am required to do at this point in proceedings. Luckily, I am always up for a challenge.

But in truth, as you know, David has been a great Captain and Chairman:

- Totally committed to his roles and hardworking – heart and soul.
- Enthusiastic and respected ambassador for our Society
- A genuine gentleman (and unbelievably, sometimes nice to me)

Absolute pleasure to have played and collaborated with him.

Gentlemen - I know David will be a great President - I commend him to you.

The newly installed President thanked Lynn and presented him with his past president's badge. He then presented Mike Stephens with the Captains Chain of Office.

Mike Stephens then spoke these words:

In taking the chair, the incoming Captain said these words I would like to thank you all for giving me the opportunity to be Captain of this great Society.

It is a privilege and honour to stand in front of you today as now Captain of the Society.

I hope to serve you well as Captain and do the best I can. I am also hopeful that I will see as many of you as possible at meetings and County Matches.

Additionally, I would like to thank my fellow Captains from Bexleyheath Golf Club, several are here today, that have supported me so far and I hope, that they continue to do so going forward.

In his first function as Chairman Mike Stephens introduced Brad Smith of Sittingbourne & Milton Regis Golf Club as his Vice Captain saying how much he was looking forward to collaborating with him.

Item 8) **Committee Members:**

The following members were elected to the Committee for a three-year period:

Andy Gee	Cherry Lodge
Stuart Gremo	Littlestone
David Donovan	Shooters hill

A vote of thanks was given to the retiring Committee Members:

David Collen	Shortlands
Paul Roberts	Woodlands Manor
Mike Streatfield	Faversham

Item 9) **Any Other Business:**

None was forthcoming.

Item 10) The Vice-Captain called for a vote of thanks to both Chairmen which was followed by the captain closing the 2024 AGM.