



Club Captain's Report – AGM 2021

If I had to use one word to describe 2021 at Muckhart Golf Club, it would be 'whirlwind'. In a case of 'perfect storm', we emerged from the depths of Covid-19 and, along with ever-changing restrictions relating to the pandemic, we reached previously unseen business levels in membership and visitor golf.

As we approached 2021, we were optimistic but cautious as the threat of further lockdowns and restrictions remained. By the end of the season we had experienced a summer that was fantastic in many ways as we saw more golfers than ever, in groups and individually and membership continued to grow. This translated directly into revenue and everyone is aware that we have managed to return a profit once again. Our treasurer will expand on this shortly but it goes without saying that I, and I'm sure everyone, am delighted to see the club doing so well.

The weather played its part this year, as did general travel restrictions but it would be wrong to attribute our financial success to these factors alone. Our courses were in great condition throughout the season and thanks for this goes to Head Greenkeeper Paul Wilkie, and a team that now numbers five including Paul, William, Sandy, Alistair and Euan, all of whom have worked tirelessly again this year and the results have been evident. We have managed to replace most of our greenkeeping equipment in the last few years but new machines are useless without the expertise and planning required to get the best out of them. Our thanks must go to Paul and his crew. Their winter project work is well underway and we will see yet more improvement as a result. I would like to mention the safety concerns that have arisen on the Cowden 6th / 15th hole. We are aware of these and have actively pursued solutions to the danger of being on the 16th yellow tee box while players are teeing off on 15. We will be planting a screen of trees in the new year but will continue to monitor the issue until we are satisfied that it has been resolved.

Returning to our staff, even Steve McIvor's dedication to Muckhart Golf Club was tested as he ploughed through the 2021 season in his usual inimitable style. We must all remember that while Steve is ever-present in the Pro Shop, which he runs to a high standard, he also manages the golf operation. This can present various challenges, all of which Steve copes with admirably. On a single day, he is able to juggle a couple of member competitions, a visiting party and possibly an open, while still providing service and a friendly face in the shop. This takes some skill and no small amount of patience. Our thanks to Steve who was ably supported this year by Scott, Graeme and Rory all of whom settled in quickly and proved to be reliable and popular. Scott, Graeme and Rory also worked in the bar where we also welcomed Charmaine and Julie to complete the bar team. As we know, the bar can often be a very busy place and all five rose to the occasion when required.

We went through two staff crises in 2021 but I am pleased to say that neither became as problematic as they might have been. Firstly, in March, just as the season was about to get underway, our Club Secretary departed at short notice. We were lucky to recruit Diane McColm who was not only keen, she was able to take over quickly. A baptism of fire and some intense quick learning meant that Diane had to settle into life at Muckhart Golf Club very quickly. Already experienced and quite clearly determined to make a difference, Diane has continued in the same vein as we have moved into winter mode and preparations for 2022. I have no doubt that as we move forward, Diane will be integral to our success. Our second 'issue' arose in the middle of the year. Having started the season with a new caterer, we felt that our whole team was complete and ready. Unfortunately, such plans do not always work out. Losing any staff mid-season is a problem but being without a caterer creates a big problem, particularly with visiting parties already booked in. Thankfully disaster was averted when Stewart and Julie Barlow stepped in not only to continue the operation but immediately enhance our offering. Stewart and Julie have been a pleasure to work with and with the support of all members there is no question that they will be successful at Muckhart Golf Club.

So our thanks go to all of our staff. Inevitably, changes will occur, starting this month when Scott heads off to begin his army career. In January, Rory is off to South America but has promised to return next season and I know that Diane is going to hold him to that promise. Given current levels of golf business and with board agreement we have recently appointed a 'Golf Operations Coordinator'. This is a new role dedicated specifically to golf, which will provide crucial support for Steve and Diane. We look forward to welcoming Joe Watts to the team in the new year.



On the course, all sections reported successful seasons with growing numbers and increased competition. Each section captain or convener has submitted reports, which have been sent to all members. Congratulations to the ever-popular Neil MacDonald on claiming his tenth club championship. This is a significant achievement especially given that he won his first one way back in 1992! There was a repeat performance for Laura Walker in the Ladies Championship, Lewis Seath claimed the honours to clinch the Junior Championship while Norman Richardson won the Seniors Club Championship. We also saw a rare feat achieved as junior captain Alex Turlik shot 64 in the Gents' Drumburn Cup to set a new course record over Arndean-Naemoor. Our three 'touring juniors' all had a great season while flying the Muckhart flag; Amongst many notable results, Alex finished tied-17th in the British Boys Championship at Royal Cinque Ports, Lewis won twice on the Scottish Junior Tour and Luke Volland took individual honours – the Niagara Cup – at the Scottish Boys Area Team Championship while representing Perth & Kinross.

I am very pleased to advise that all of our tees are now sponsored! We appreciate the ongoing support of our existing corporate partners and welcome the new ones as well. I encourage our members to give their custom to our partners, all of whom are first-class. In particular, I would like to mention Crush Interiors who provided their services free of charge to enable us to refurbish the clubhouse early this year. I am sure everyone will agree that they did an amazing job!

We have an excellent staff at Muckhart Golf Club but the ultimate difference is made through our volunteers. We sent over 70 invitations to our volunteers' golf day, demonstrating that a huge number of members willingly devote their time and energy to making our club even better. It is impossible for me to thank each and every one of our volunteers here but on behalf of the whole club, I extend my gratitude to you. This year we had a slightly larger board and I also thank these members who perform a variety of tasks, especially heading up our individual sections and ensuring that they run smoothly. While Junior Convener Colin Melville, Seniors Captain Ian Barker and Gents Captain Scott Marshall will stay on in 2022, we are sad to see Ladies Captain Gillian Doig's term come to an end. Gillian had big shoes to fill when she took over from Rona in 2020 but has been a fantastic captain and leaves behind a section that has made huge strides in the last few years. I am however very glad that Gillian has offered to remain on the board as her contribution goes far beyond the smooth running of the ladies section. I would like to wish incoming Ladies Captain Irene Reid the best of luck in her new role. I have no doubt that she will continue the good work. Unfortunately we will lose the services of Rona Sarafilovic from the board next year. Rona's three-year stint has been notable for her successful year as Ladies Captain but also for her overall contribution to the board, particularly through her experience in the service industry. The 'Get Into Golf' membership that Rona launched continues to go from strength to strength and will be a lasting legacy. Thank you Rona. Ben Thornber and Rosemary Turlik continue to make a significant difference through their work for the board, often behind the scenes, and I am delighted that they are staying on in 2022. The introduction of our Honorary President, Johnny Stewart has proved to be a masterstroke and we have all enjoyed working alongside him. He has definitely ignored the 'honorary' part of his role and has involved himself in all board matters, usually making a huge difference. That almost completes the board line-up bar one person. I have run out of ways to accurately sum up the difference our treasurer, Chris Higgo makes to Muckhart Golf Club. Although much of his work is behind the scenes and while many people put in a lot of hours, the results of his efforts are what set Chris apart. Having a dedicated and expert hand controlling the finances is crucial and we are only where we are now thanks to Chris. All of us are in his debt. Thank you to all of our board members.

With the best will in the world and even with rising visitor numbers, a golf club's ultimate success depends on its members. We are lucky to have such supportive and active members and I can confidently declare that the club is thriving. On behalf of the Board, I would like to express my gratitude to every single one of you for your continued support of Muckhart Golf Club.

Looking ahead to 2022, none of us know what to expect or what will happen. Once again, we fear a return to restrictions and possibly closure of parts of our club. We hope for the best and remain positive. All being well, we anticipate an even better year and look forward to continuing our progress.

Chris Turlik
Club Captain